

167 THE
Imitation or follo-
wing of Christ, and
the contemning of
worldly vanities:

Wherevnto, as springing out
of the same roote, we haue adioyn-
ed another pretie treatise, en-
titled, The perpetuall re-
ioyce of the Godly, e-
uen in this
lyfe. p. 40. 6

Ephesians 5.
Ye you followers of GOD as deere
children, and walke in lone, euen as
Christ hath loued vs, &c.

Seene and allowed according to the
order appointed,

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Let not contentment with the world
or with their policies bring us into fall
Thine only this shall still thy partner be
Hence the ~~world~~  was placed for me
I have with me a more substantial blessing
Would it should more for thee than for thyself
& rather endure glory for a life

Ashton Jan 3. 1743

To the Noble and Right
worthy Prince Thomas Duke
of Norfolke, Earle Marshall of
Englande, one of the Lordes of the
Queenes Maiesties priuie Counsell,
and Knight of the ho-
norable order of
the Garter.



Augustus
Cesar, renou-
med Prince,
being presen-
ted by a poore
and simple Poet with a few
briefe and compendious Epi-
grams, dyd not onelye, by aun-
swering with the lyke, seeme to
accept and allowe that his tra-
A. 2. uale,

24
1637
1. 1759

THE EPISTLE.

uaile, but also wyth great and ample rewarde, giue encouragement therewithall: I trust that your Lordshippe (being of your selfe both wise and well affected) will much more in this so precious a present, receyue my trauayle and fruitefull expleyt. The worke of it selfe, deserues a good Patrone, and the worthynesse thereof putteth me in mynde of your grace. And although in the same, no difficult questions at all are pursued (I meane in matters of religion)

THE EPISTLE.

yet ghostly instructiōs and right
Godly lessons at large are dila-
ted: knowledge of letters and li-
terall sense, therein so much is
nothing supported, as amende-
ment of life & maners aduan-
ced. How much it is needfull in
these present dayes, your Lord-
shippe (I thinke) doth well un-
derstand: & to you it is knowne,
how far doth dissent our life frō
our knowledge. And by howe
much the more it shalbe by your
Lordshippe thought worthy the
sale, by so much undoubtedlye,

A.3.

your

THE EPISTLE.

your honor the better, shall shew
your selfe fautor and friend vn-
to vertue. Not distance of place
coulede haue altered my mynde,
but that to your grace I woulde
haue presented this signe of good
will and loyall entent. And
yet (notwithstanding such in-
warde affection) I am to craue
pardon of skillesse attempt, and
hoping nolesse then fauor ther-
in, I leaue your good grace, vnto
the Almightye, who alwaies in
honour preserue your estate.

Your humble Oratour.

Edwarde Hake.

To the Reader.



HOV hast here (gentle Reader) the path-
way to perfit lyfe, vnder the tytle of *I be I-*
mitatio of Christ, whose
footesteps if thou fol-
low, thou canst neuer
go astray, for he is the
way, the *truth*, and the
life. Learne here wyth

Christ to contemne the worlde, learne his mo-
destie, his meekenesse and humilitie. In doc-
trine, learne his synceritie, simplicitie & veri-
tie. Learne his loue & vncomparable charity.
And to conclude, learne to beare thine owne
Crosse after Christ manfully. This shalt thou
soone learne to doe, if thou canst once become
humble in thine owne eyes. For to the hum-
ble God giueth grace, but the prowde he doth
resist. Fly therefore from pride, as farre as pos-
sible thou mayest. It was the ouerthrow of the
first man: yea God spared not his Aungels in
theyr pryde. Wherefore Christ hath sayde,
that who so shal exalt himself shal be brought
low, and who so shall humble kimselſe, shall
be exalted. Humble thy selfe therefore wyth

A.iiij.

Christ,

To the Reader.

Christ, follow his steps in this lyfe, and where thou shalt not finde thy selfe able to treade in his steppes, as thou wouldest, call vppon him for helpe, and thou shalt be sure that eyther he will make thee able, or else accept thy desire, for the deede that thou desirest to doe. And that crowne of righteousnesse that is due vnto him, he will giue vnto thee in that daye when he shall take thee vnto himselfe. Farewell in Christ, and praye with all the holy Sainctes : that Christes Kingdome may shortly

come. A.

men.



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 the feare of God.



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Lib. 2

Of the contempt of vwordly vanities.

The first Chapter.

¶ He that followeth mee, doth not walke in darkness, but hath the light of lyfe.



These are Christs bys owne wordes, by the which we are admonished to follow his lyfe & maners, if wee desire to be lyghtned truely & deliuered from all blindness of hart. Therfore we ought to meditate & ponder the lyfe of Christ wyth exceeding great studie and desire. For vndoubtedly the doctrine of Christ doth passe all the doctrine of all good men that euer were; and in case a man be indued wyth the spirit of Christ, the same doth finde in his word a secret or hidden manna. Holobest, it happeneth y many doe therfore conceyue small desire by the often hearing of the Gospel preached, bicause the same are boyde of the spirit of Christ. For assuredly if a man will vnderstand Christ his wordes fully, & with delectacion, he must of necessity endeuor to fashio out his whole lyfe according to his exaple. What good doth difficult reasoning about the Trinitie in case thou be boyd of blindness of minde, & doth therfore offende the blessed Trinitie? Surely they are not harde sayings that can make a holy & iust man, but it is a studious lyfe that doth make one beloued of God. I had rather
seele

The Imitation of Christ.

feele the repentance of my sinnes within my selfe, than vnderstande after what sorte repentaunce is defined. If thou haue al the scriptures by hart, yea, and all the witty sayings of the Philosophers to, what good do all these without Charitie & the grace of God: Vanitie is vaine, & all things are but vanitie, besides the loue of God and hys only seruice. That (whē all is done) is highest wisdome, to go on vnto the Kingdome of Heauen by contemning of the Worlde. It is vanitie for a man to seeke transitorie riches, and to put his hope in the same: It is vanitie for a man to seeke for honour & promotion, to aduance himself: Vanitie it is to follow the lusts of the flesh, & to conet those things which shall afterwards cause one grievously to be punished: Vanitie it is to wishe for long life, & all that while to make small account of a good life: Vanitie it is to looke vpon the life present onely, & neuer to cast what will come after: Vanitie it is to loue those things which do passe away with incredible swiftnesse, & yet not to make haste to that place where ioy doth endure everlastingly. Be ofte mindful of y^e proverb, which saith. Neither is the eie satisfied with seeing, nor the eare filled with hearing. Wherefore, exhortour thou to withdraw thy minde frō the loue of transitorie things, & be take thy selfe to thinges that be Heauenly. For they which be obedient to his owne lustes, y^e same do both defile their minds with the conscience of sinne, & doe thereby also forgoe the grace and fauor of God.

Of Modestie.

The seconde Chapter.

All men are naturally desirous of learning : But what good doth knowledge that is boide of Religion ? Euen the basest Husbandeman that is, hauing the true feare of God with him, is in all respects to be preferred before the loftie Philosopher, who (by Astronomicall speculation) occupieth his head about the course of heauē, without the regarde of himselfe. Hee that knoweth himselfe aright, the same setteeth but small store by himselfe, neyther is he tickled with worldly praises. Though I haue knowledge of all things in the worlde, and yet doe want the loue of G O D, what good shall the same doe me before God, who will iudge me according to my deedes ? Giue ouer grādie desire to learne, which diuersly distracteth the minde, and deceiveth it. For the learned sort haue desire to be had in admiration, and to be called wise. Now, many things there are, the knowledge of which doe lyttle profyte the Soule, or rather nothing at all : and he is a verie foole that earnestly applyeth any other

Learning without true religion, nothing worth.

Noscere ipsum,

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things than those which doe make to hys owne saluation. Many words doe not fill the soule, but a godly life doth refresh the minde, and an vpright conscience doth minister boldnesse to approche vnto God. Looke how manye the more and better things that thou hast learned, so much the more grievous punishment shalt thou haue, except thou leade thy life so much the more vertuously. Wherefore ware thou not insolent, either for any cunning or knowledge that thou hast, but rather become the more fearefull for the knowledge of things that god hath giuen thee aboue others. And if thou thinke to thy selfe that thou knowest many things, & that thou hast learned many things, wete thou well that there be a great sort of things more which thou doest not know: and be not therefore proude & lofty, but rather acknowledge thine owne ignorance and want of skill. Wherefore shouldest thou put forth thy self afore other, when there are many founde better learned, and more skilfull of the law than thou thy selfe art: If thou wilt know and learne some thing with vility and profit, loue thou to be vnkowne, and to be accounted as no bodye. For true knowing & despising of a mans owne selfe, is the chiefest and moste profitable learning
aboue

we ought
not to ad-
uaunce
our selues
of learning
but rather
to acknow-
ledge our
ignorance
and want
of skill.

The Imitation of Christ.

4

aboue al other, and great wisdom and perfection it is to set little store by himselfe, and to magnifie other men, and to haue them in price and estimation. If thou shalt see one offende openly, or commit some greivous crime, thou oughtest not therefore to thinke thy selfe more perfecte than he is: For thou knowest not how long thou shalt thy selfe continue in vertuall life. We are fraile assuredly all the sort of vs: but yet thinke thou that no bodie is more fraile than thy selfe.

Of the doctrine of the truth.

The thirde Chapter.



Appie is hee whome the truth teacheth: not with letters and wordes that vanish, but wyth it selfe, by it selfe, euen as it is. For oure opinions and senses doe oft tymes deceyue vs, and bee of lyttle force. What profiteth subtile disputacion about hid and obscure matters, which though we be ignorant of, yet shall they be no hindrance vnto vs at the iudgement day of God? Truly, it is notable follie that we doe wilfully apply our selues vnto curious and hurtfull thynges, and despise such thynges as bee profitable

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profitable and necessary for vs. Being so Egle eyed, yet we see nothing at all. Wherefore should we passe vpon those diffused termes of the Logicians called Genus and Species? For he is ridde from a great number of opinions whome that everlasting Worde doth speake vnto. For all things haue their beyng of the worde onely: and all thinges doe speake the worde onely: & this is that beginning which doth speake vnto vs, and without whome nobody vnderstandeth or iudgeth the thing aright: But hee vnto whome all thinges are that one thing, and which draweth all things vnto that one thing, & beholdeth all things in that one thing, the same is able to be constant of minde and euer more to repose himselfe in God. O God of truth, make me one with thee in everlasting loue. It priketh me to reade & here many things diuers times. It is in thee whatsoeuer I doe desire and couet. Let all Teachers holde their peace: let the whole worlde keepe silence in thy sight: doe thou onely speake vnto mee. For the more nêrely toynded that euery man is with himselfe, and the more dwelling in himselfe, hee doth the lesse runne at random abrode: the same doth perceyue both so many the mo thynges, and the more profounde thinges wythout labour,
bicause

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5

bicause he receyueh the light of hys vnder-
standing from aboue. A pure, simple, and
constaunt soule is not drawne into dyuers
wozkes, which doth all thinges vnto the ho-
nour of God, & laboureth earnestly to cease
from al loue of himselfe. For what doth moze
hinder a man and bere him, than the vnruely
affections of the soule? A good and godly man
doth first and sozmost take deliberation wyth
himselfe, befoze such time as he begin his bu-
sinesse: neyther doth he suffer hymselfe to be
drawne away to wicked lusses, by his owne
deedes, but enforceth them to be at obedience
and commandement of right reason. Surely
ly there is no combat moze sharpe, than for
a man to endeuor to conquere himselfe: and
thys is the woꝝke that we ought to take in
hande, that we doe conquere our selues, and
become every daye moze strong than our sel-
ues, and euermoze profite somewhat in ver-
tuous life. For the whole perfection of thys
life hath a certaine imperfection adioined vn-
to it, and all the knowledg of truth that we
haue here, is yet not boyde of darknesse and
ignorauice. The humble knowledg of our
selfe is altogither a moze certaine and appoy-
ned way vnto God, than profound searching
out of knowledg. And yet is not knowledg

There is
no combat
moze excel-
lent, then
for a man
to conquer
himselfe.

The Imitation of Christ.

An vp=
right con=
science
ought to
be prefer=
red before
worldly
know=
ledge.

to be founde fault withall, or the vnderstand-
ding of any thing, which being duely conside-
red, is good, and the creature of God. How-
beit, I say that an vpright conscience is euer
more to be preferred before it, and the lyfe
that treadeth the path of vertue and Godly-
nesse. But bicause most men doe studie rather
howe to haue knowledge, than to liue well, it
happeneth that most commonly they erre or
waider, and doe get in maner no fruite and
commodity, or at least wise, slender and smal
in consideration of their traueyle: who in
case they woulde bee as diligent both in ro-
ting by of vices, and also in sowing of Ver-
tues, as they are in proposing of questions,
certes there shoulde not be so manie enormi-
ties and haynous offences committed of the
Vulgar people, nor yet shoulde there reigne
so great libertie of lyfe amongst those that
are learned. And when the day of our doome
or iudgement shall come, and accompt shall
be required at our handes, not what we haue
read, but what we haue done: nor yet howe
well wee haue spoken, but howe Christian-
like we haue liued. So to nowe I praye you,
where are all those maisters and passing fel-
lowes at thys present which were once of
thyne acquaintaunce, whilst they were ly-
uing,

uing, and flourished in learnyng, whose s^pendes other men doe nowe enioye, which perhappes doe not so much as once thinke vpon them nowe? Euen they seemed to bee somewhat also as long as they were alyue: and yet nowe there is no wordes at all made of them. So sone doth the glorie of thys Worlde vanyshe awaye. If these men had framed a lyfe accordyng to theyr knowledge, then had they traueyled in the studyes of learning happyls. Howe many men doe perishe in the Worlde through theyr vayne knowledge, in that they make small accompt of the worshippe of G D D: and bycause the same had lieber to be great than to bee humble, it happeneth that theyr thoughts are nothyng but vayne and vnprofitable. Hee is great in deede, which hath great charitic. He is great in deede, which beyng small in hys owne iudgement, doth accompt all Type of honour as a thyng of nothyng. Hee is wyse in deede, which reckneth all earthly thynges but for Ducke and Dydure, that hee maye wane Christ vnto himselfe: and hee is well learned in deede, that doth Gods will and forsaketh his owne.

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Of witte in our doings.

The fourth Chapter.



We muste not beleue enerye thing that is spoken, or put into our heades, but the matter must warilye and at leysure be pondered, howe it agreeth wyth the will of God. Cuill oftentimes (alacke for pittie) is sower both credited & spoken touching another man that god is: so great is our infirmitie. But such as be persite, doe not beleue mans saying, because they know mans weakenesse to be both prone vnto naughtynesse, and oftentimes to offende and fall in his wordes. It is a point of great wisdom, neyther to be headlong hastie in those things that thou doest, nor yet to bee so stiffe, that thou wylt neuer giue ouer that which thou hast once coneted in thine heart. It is a point of the like wisdom, neither to credite enery mans wordes, nor yet by & by to viter & communicate vnto other those things which thou hast heard or credited. Counsell with the wise and godly person, and rather endeuor to bee instructed of him that is better, than thy selfe to folloiw thine owne deuyles. A good life maketh

The cōs-
fayle of
wisemen
rather to
be follo-

keeth one wise to Godwarde, and skilfull of
 many things. The more humble and obedi-
 ent every man doth shewe himsele to God,
 both the wiser and the more quiet is the same
 person in all things.

Of the reading of holy Scripture.

The fift Chapter.



Truth must be sought for in the
 holye Scripture, and not elo-
 quence: and they ought to be
 reade with the same spirite, as
 they are vttered forth vnto vs:
 and in them profite rather than the subtiltie
 of reasoning shoulde be ensued: neyther is it
 lesse meete for vs willingly to read godly and
 homely bookes, than such as are difficult and
 profounde: neyther let the authoritie of the
 wyter moue thee, to consider whether he haue
 bene of small or great learning, but let the
 lone of pure truth draw thee to reading: and
 againe consider, not what person it is that
 speaketh it, but what thing it is that is spoke.
 Men doe perishe, but Gods truth abideth for
 ever: and God speaketh vnto vs after diuers
 sortes, without hauing any respect at all vnto
 persons. Our owne curiositie doth often-
 times

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times hinder vs, whilst that wee couet to perceyue and discusse those thinges, whiche shoulde be let alone in all respects. If thou desire to haue fruite and commoditie by them, reade thou them humbly, simply, faithfullye, & neuer couet after the name of knowledge. None to be questioning wyth godly men, and attentiuely heare their sayinges, and be not offended at the nipping wordes of thyne Elders; for they are not causelesse spoken.

Of the vnruely affections of the minde.

The. vi. Chapter.

A conetous mind neuer satisfi-
ed, but an humble spirite leadeth his life in peace



Whensoeuer a man doth couet any thing inordinately, by and by hee is made vniquiet in his mind. The proude or conetous man is neuer at rest wythin himselfe: but he which is poore and humble of minde, the same leadeth his lyfe in perfecte peace. But he which hath not yet mortified the affections of his mind, that person is both easily tempted, and also is overcommen with trifling and vile things. One weake of mind, and that as yet is halfe carnal and prone vnto sensualitie, is scarcely able to pull hymselfe wholly away from earthly desires: and therefore

therefore while he doth withdraue himselfe, full often hee doth the same wpyth sorrowfulnesse, and if one doe withstande hym, hee is soone moued or angry. But if he haue ensued that thing which he hath desired, he is forthwith pricked with the conscience of sinne, because he hath obeyed his desire, which doth no whit make to the peace which hee sought for. Therefore true peace of minde is founde, not in obeying, but in resisting the desires and affections: and that peace is not in the heart of the carnall man, nor in one addicted to eternall thinges, but in a man that is seruent and spirituall.

Of fleeing vaine hope and pride.

The.vij.Chapter.



It is a point of lightnesse to put hope in men & other creatures. bee not thou ashamed to bee a slaue to others for the loue of Iesus Christ, and to seeme poore in this life. Stay not vpon thine owne selfe, but put thy hope in God. Endeavour to thy power, and God shal helpe thy good will and meaning: put no confidence either in thyne owne knowledge or in the pollicie of any moztall man,

A poynt of lightnesse to trust in man, or any other creature.

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man, but rather in the fauor of God who both helpeth the humble, & also thrusteth down the proud. Gloze not either in thy riches if thou haue them, noz yet in thy friendes, if they be mightie : but glozie in God which both minis-
 streth all things, and desireth to gyue hym-
 selfe aboue all things. Aduance not thy selfe
 as touching either the mightinesse oz beau-
 tie of thy body, which being taken with some
 smal oz light diseale, is by and by defaced. Do
 not thou stand in thine owne conceite for thy
 towardnesse and wit, least thou offend God,
 whose gyft it is, whatsoener goodnesse thou
 hast of nature. Iudge not thy selfe better
 than other, least perhappes thou be counted
 worse wpyth God, who knoweth what is in
 man. Be not proud with well dowing. For
 Gods iudgementes are farre other than the
 iudgementes of men, whome that thyng
 doth many tymes dysplease, which doth like
 men well ynough. If there be any good thyng
 in thee, thinke that there be better things in
 another man, to the intent that thou mayest
 keepe styll humblenesse of minde. It doth no
 hurt at all, though a man make himselfe in-
 ferior to all men : but it is hurtfull if a
 man doe preferre himselfe but befoze one
 man. An humble man enioyeth contynnall
 peace :

Do hurt
 to make
 himselfe
 inferior to
 al men, but
 to preferre
 himselfe
 befoze o-
 ther it is
 hurtfull.

peace: but the minde of the halowtie person is
tossed oftentimes with anger and ambition.

Of taking heede of ouermuch familiaritie.

The viij. Chapter.



Disclose not thy minde to euery
man: but communicate thy bu-
sinesse wpth the person that is
wise and Godlye. Be seldome
times conuersaunt with youth,
and those that be not of the houtholde of faith.
Flatter not the rich, nor yet be desirous to
line with great men, but rather associate thy
selfe to modest and simple, to godly and well
manered persons, and deale in thinges that
are profitable. Be familiar with no women,
but commende or praise all godly women vni-
uersally. Wish to be familiar to God onely,
and his Angels. Eschue the familiarity
of certaine men. Charitie must be hadde to-
warde all men: but it is not expedient to be
familiar with all men. Sometime it chaun-
ceth that one being unknowne, hath a verpe
good name, and after wards, when that same
partie is once knowne and present, he grow-
eth out of estimation, and becommeth more
obscure againe. We thinke to our selues

A harde
thing to
indge wch
of a man,
before he
be tryed &
knowne.

some.

something that we shall like other men well
with whome we are growne into familiari-
tie, of whome when the wyckednesse of oure
condicions is once perceyued, we doe also the
moze displease and mislyke them.

Of obedience and subiection.

The .ix. Chapter.

To live in
subiection
of other,
and not at
a mans
owne li-
bertie, doth
very much
auayle.



I very much auayleth to lyue
in the subiection of an other, and
not to be at a mans owne liber-
tie : and much moze safelye we
men obey, than rule and com-
maunde. Many be obedient for necessitie ra-
ther than for loue : & the same they doe with
payne, and quickly murmur and grutch :
neither doe those persons attaine vnto the li-
berty of minde, except they shew themselves
obedient both from the heart, and also for
Gods sake. Whether soeuer thou turne thy
selfe, no rest shalt thou finde in any place but
in modestly bearing the rule of an other mā.
The ymagination and change of places hath
deceyued many. Every man hath delight to
doe according to hys owne iudgement, and
sheweth himselfe somewhat friendly to them
which be of that minde that hee is of. But if
God

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God be among vs, we must wholly giue ouer
our owne opinion and purpose, sometimes to
enjoy the commoditie of peace. For who hath
so good a witte that he knoweth all thinges?
Wherefore trust not to much to thine owne
opinion: but heare also the iudgement of o-
ther men willingly. And in case thou shalt
giue ouer thine owne iudgement for Gods
sake (notwithstanding that it be good) & shalt
followe an other, thereby thou shalt profite
and come forward the better. For I haue of-
tentimes hearde, that it is moze safe to heare
& receyue counsell, than to giue counsell. For
possible it is, that a mans owne iudgement,
and opinion may be good ynough in a mater:
and yet if the same wyll not obeie other, so
long as reason, or the cause doth requyre it,
euen by that token, may he disclose & betray
his owne pryde and wilfull stubburnesse.

to much in
his owne
opinion,
although
it be good,
betokeneth
pride, and
wilfull
stubbur-
nesse.

Of the auoyding of familiaritie of wordes.

The x. Chapter.



Take heede of the haunt of men
as much as it is possible. For
talke which doth commonlye
passe about worldly thinges, is
cause of great hurte, although
it

of
guided
ordinar
one, and
the same.

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It otherwise procéde from a minde that is
simple and without euill meaning. For be-
ing snared with vanitie, we are quickly de-
filed: and manye times it happeneth that I
doe wishe that I had helde my tongue, & that
I had not bene in pzease and company. Now
if the cause be sought why we doe so gladiye
talke together and babble one with another,
(whereas neuerthelesse we seldome returne
vnto silence, without some remozse of consci-
ence,) it shal be found to be this, that we seeke
after comfozt by often communication, & de-
sire to relieue our wearyed mindes with sin-
dry cogitacions, & so the moze earnestly that
we loue and couet euery thing, or the moze
we perceyue that euery thing is against vs,
so much it lyketh vs the moze to talke and
thinke thereof, and that most commonly in
vaine. For this outwarde comfozt, causeth
no small hynderaunce vnto the inwarde and
ghostly comfozt. Therefore must wee watch
and pray, least the time be spent in ydlenesse:
and in case it lyketh and be expedient for thee
to speake, speake profitable thinges. That
ought most of all to feare vs from babling,
both for that the custome of babling is sinful,
and also because it hyndereth our commyn-
g forwarde to vertuous lyfe. But it is not a
lyttle

To much
babling
causeth
sinne, and
hindeeth

lyttle profitable to become better and better in godlinesse, to vse vertuous talke and communication thereof; especiall ye when men lyke one to the other in mynde and spirite are coupled togyther in God.

Of the attayning of peace and earnest desire of profiting.

The xi. Chapter.



We myght enioy sound and perfect peace, except our hys were occupped wyth the sayings and doings of other mē, which are no point of our charge: but how can hee liue in peace anye whyle, that entermedleth hymselfe in other mens affayres? That seeketh for occasions abroade? That calleth home hymselfe eyther lyttle or sel dome times: Blessed are the simple. For they doe attayne vnto much peace. And now, why haue certayne godly men bene so perfect, and so addicted to the contemplacion of heauenlye thynges: namely, bycause they haue earnestlye endeuored to mortifie all their earthlye lustes, and therfore haue bene able to cleaue fast, and freely to gyue themselves ouer to God with all the powers of their soule. But

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as for vs, we are occupied ouermuch wth the troublesome affections of our minde, and are to much busied with fraile and transitory things. Seldome tymes also doe we conquer euen but one vice or sinne: And as for daylye p^{ro}fitting and comming forwarde in godlynesse, we are not kindled vnto it, and therefore doe we remayne still colde and luke warme. Howbeit (if being wholly mortified vnto our selues) we were not kept backe as men inwardely intangled: vndoubtedlye it woulde come to passe, that we might be able to feele deuine things, and somewhat to make p^{ro}ofe of heauenly matters. The greatest (if it be not the whole) let doth vtterly consist in this: that we be not free from the troublesome affections and desires of the minde, nor endeavour to walke the perfitte path of the godlye. In case the least aduersitie in the worlde doe at anye time chaunce vnto vs, we are verye soone discouraged, and then doe betake our selues to such comfort as the worlde doth minister. But if we woulde labour wth tooth & nayle, to stricke to our tackling, as it becometh valiant souldiers, there is no doubt but we should see (euen from Heauen) ayde sent vnto vs. Agayne, the same God is readye to helpe them that fight and trust vpon his fa-

tion, which procureth vs occasions to fight, to the intent that we may get the victory. But if we shall put the perfection of a godlye lyfe in doing of these outward things, our godliness shall then be sone at a poynt. For, the Hatchet must be put to the very roote, that being purged from desires, we may attayne vnto a calme and quiet soule. If we should plucke by by the rootes but one tyme euerye yeare, we should quickly be made perfit men.

Nowe, contrarywise it commeth to passe, that we finde our selues many times to haue bene better and more pure from sinne at the beginning of our repentance and amendment of life, than we were after a great many yeares of our profession. Whereby it happeneth, that whereas our heate and profiting ought euerye daye to be more and more, we thinke it a great matter if a man can keepe still a peece of his first zeale and earnestnesse. If we would strayne & force our selues somewhat at the beginning, it myght be brought to passe that afterwarde we shoulde be able to performe all thyngs with delite and gladnesse. It is (no doubt) a payne to leaue things that a man hath vsed himselfe vnto: a more paine also to fight agaynst a mans own will. But if thou shalt not conquere small and tri-

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ding thinges, when wilt thou be able to banquish and subdue the harder thinges: First of all, resist thine owne inclination, and forsake naughty custome, least perhaps it leade thee by litle and litle vnto greater difficultie and hardnesse. Would to God thou wouldest marke both howe great peace thou shouldest cause vnto thy selfe, and ioye vnto others in behauing thy selfe godly. Out of doubt, thou wouldest then be moze careful to come forwarde in ghostly thinges.

Of the profite of Aduersitie.

The .xij. Chapter.



It is profitable for vs to be kept downe with calamities and aduersities sometime, bicause thei oftentimes doe call back a man vnto himselfe, whereby he may know that he lyueth here in banishment, and maye not put his hope or affiaunce in anye worldly thinges. It is also expedient for vs, that some should speake euill of vs, and haue an euill and sinisser opinion of vs, though our outwarde behauiour and inwarde man be tolerable. For thele thinges (I saye) doe much make vnto modestie, and keepe vs from ambition;

God is the
searcher of
the heart.

blition: for by this meane it is wrought, that we so much the more seeke for GOD (the inward witness) when as we be outwardly contemned of men, and not sufficiently credited or beleued. Therfore ought man so wholly to depend vpon God, that it be not necessary for him to seeke many comforts. For when a man of good meaning is pressed and assaulted with aduersitie, or agriued for his cruell thoughts, then doth he vnderstand that gods help is so much the more necessary vnto him, without whome he findeth that he is able to doe no good at all. Then is he sorie: then he sigheth: then he prayeth to be deliuered from this wretchednesse which he doth suffer: then doth it grieue him to liue any longer, & he wisheth for death, that departing out of this troublesome lyfe, he might liue with Christ. Then doth he right well perceiue that a man cannot haue perfect security and full peace in this life.

Man ought to depende wholly vpon God.

Of resisting Temptacions.

The. xiiij. Chapter.



As long as we are in this lyfe, we cannot be without miseries & temptacions. For which cause also it is writtē in Iob, that mans lyfe vppon the earth is a temptacion

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tion

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tacion and warfare. Therefore ought every man to be carefull about his temptacions, & to watch with prayer, least the Devil find occasion to deceyue him; who neuer slombreth, but alwaies wandreth about, seeking whom he may deuour. No man is so perfitt and holy, but that he is sometyme assaulted with them, neither can we wholly be without them. For temptacions are oftentimes very profitable vnto one; though they be troublesome for the time, because a man is pressed downe, is purged, is instructed by them. All the godly that euer were, haue passed ouer their lyfe in aduersities and temptacions, and by them haue growen by vnto vertuous life: and such as haue not bene able well to brycke them, the same haue become Reprobats, and reuolted. There is no calling eyther so holy, or place so solitary, but therein are temptacions and aduersities. To be short, as long as a man lyueth, he is neuer safe wholly fro temptacions, because the same is in our selues, of which we are tempted, seing we are bozne in concupiscence and lust. Temptacions come vpon temptacions, miseries vpon miseries, and alwaies haue we somewhat that we must beare or suffer. For we haue lost the state of our felicity. Now, whilst many men do thus temptacions,

tacions, they fall into moze greuous temptacions. We shall not conquere by running alway onely, but by pacience and true modestie shall we be made moze strong then our enimies. He which outwardely declining temptacions onely, doth not pull them vp by the rootes: the same is so farre from profiting and comming forward, that temptacions, do so much the sooner assaile him agayne, and he is by so much in the worse case agayne. By enduring a lyttle and a little, (and that with pacience) thou shalt sooner by Gods helpe get the maystrie, then with sturdinesse and importunitie. We counsell oftentimes in temptation. And if another man be tempted, shew not thy selfe rough and rygorous vnto hym, but rather minister him comfort, like as thou thy selfe wouldest haue comfort ministered vnto thee. The original of all euill temptacions, is vncoustantie of minde and slendernesse of fayth or trust in God. For lyke as a shyp without sterne is tossed to and fro with winds, euen so a lose fellow, and one that can but euill keepe himselfe vnto that which he once determined, is diuersly tempted. As the fyre maketh triall of yron, so doth temptation make triall of a man. We many tymes know not what we are able to doe: but what we

C. liij.

are,

Comfort
that afflicted
as thou
wouldest
be comforted
in affliction,

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are, temptation doth make manifest vnto vs.
Most of all we must be vigilant or watchfull
at the beginning of temptation. For then is
the enimie more easily conquered, if he be not
suffered to enter into the doore of the mynde,
but be met without the Thresholde by the
way, as sone as ever he had knocked. There-
fore full well did a certayne Poet say.

Stop the beginning, so shalt thou be sure,

All doubtfull diseases to swage and to cure.

But if that thy Physicke thou happen to slack,

Then helpe comes to late: the sicke goes to wrack.

Ouid.

For first of all, the bare cogitation commeth
to thy mind: next a vehement imagination:
last of all, a delectacion, and wicked motion,
and assent. Wherby it hapneth, that by little
and little the malicious enimie doth enter in
thorowlye, whylst that he is not encountred
withall at the beginning. And how much the
longer that euery man is dull and slow to re-
sist, so much both the weaker dailye doth the
same man become, & the enimie likewise the
more mightye against him. Some at the be-
ginning of their amendment of life, doe suf-
fer more sharpe bickrings: other at the end:
other are vexed all their life long: some there
are that be tempted but sleightly, according
to the wisdom and equitie of Gods pro-
vidence,

*The spee-
cher a man
doth resist
temptaci-
ons, the
better.*

dence, which wayeth the maners and deserts of men, and dispenseth all thinges befoze, to the saluation of his elect. Therfoze we ought not to despayze, whilst we are tempted, but pray vnto God so much the moze seruently, that he would vouchsafe to helpe vs in all aduersitie: who no doubt will so temper the euent of such temptacion, (accozding to Pauls saying) as we may be able to bere it. Therfoze, in all temptacions and aduersities, let vs humble our minds to the mighty hande of God, which is able to keepe and to lift vp the humble of hart. In temptacions and aduersities, a man is tryed howe much good he hath done, and therein both the greater grace doth appeare, & also vertue doth become the moze manifest: neyther is it anye great matter if one be godly and zealous when nothing doth trouble him: but if he shew himselfe patient in the time of misery, then is there god hope that he shal come fozward much. Some there are which get out safely from great temptacions, and the same againe are oftentimes overcome with small and dayly temptacions, so y^e (being so discouraged) they neuer haue confidence in themselves in the great temptacions that are weake in so small & trifling.

We ought not to despayze in temptacion, but pray vnto God the moze seruently, to help vs in all temptacions and aduersities.

The Imitation of Christ.
Of taking heede of rash iudgement.

The .xiiij. Chapter.



Looke vpon thyne owne selfe :
beware thou iudge not of the
deedes of other me : for in iudg-
ing of other we do both labour
in vayne and are commonlye
deceiued, and doe quickly sinne or offend. But
we alwayes traueile fruitfully with the iudg-
ing of our owne selues, and with the exami-
ning of our owne selues. As we fantasie and are
affected toward euerie thing, so most com-
monlye doe we iudge therof : and quickly doe
we lese tyme and by sight iudgement, bicause
we are blinded with selfeloue. Notwithstanding, if we
were alwaies led with the loue of God alone,
our wit repugning the truth, shoulde not so
sone trouble or disorder vs. But many times
somewhat is hid inwardlye, or is also added
without, which draweth vs awaye wyth it.
Manye in their deedes doe loue themselves
vniuersallye, and those same doe seeme to be so
long of quiet and pacified minde, as thinges
doe fall out accordyng to their owne heartes
desire. But if thinges go otherwise then they
themselves doe couet, they are easily moued
and

and brought vnto sorowe. Discensions doe arise many tymes and oft betwene friends and countreymen, and betwene the godly, and men wholly bent vnto vertuous lyfe, for the diuersitie of iudgements and opinions. For auncient custome is left with much a doe: besyde that that he seeth, no man is willingly led. Therefore if thou shalt more stay thy selfe, eyther vpon thine owne reason, or vpon thine owne traieple, then vpon that vertue which maketh man subiect vnto Iesus Christ, scarcely (nay not scarcelye neither) shall it come to passe, that thou mayest be such a man as the light of Gods spirite maye illuminate: For we ought to bee in subiection wholly vnto God.

God will haue vs to be wholye in subiection vnto him, and to climbe aboue the reache of reason with loue enflamed.

Of the workes of loue.

The .xv. Chapter.



There ought to be no hurt done at all for any cause, or for the loue of any mortal man: but for the profite of the needy person, a good dede is now and then to be let passe for a tyme, or to be turned into a better dede. For by this meanes a good dede is

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is not neglected, but is turned into the better. Without Charitie the outwarde worke doth nothing preuaile: but whatsoeuer is done in Charitie, although the same be but small and course, it is made altogether fruitefull & profitable. For God doth more behold with howe great loue euerye thing is done, then howe great the same thing is. Much doth he that loueth much: Much doth he that doth something well: well doth he that serueth the common profite more then his owne will. Many times it seemeth to be Charitie which is rather carnallitie. For seldome it hapneth that carnall inclinatio is away, a mans owne will, hope of reward, desire of commoditie. He that is indued with true and perfecte Charitie, the same serueth himselfe in nothing, but studieth for Gods glozy in all things. He doth also repine at no body, because he loueth no priuate ioy, nor will reioyce in himselfe, but wisheth to be made blessed in GOD about all good thinges. He attributeth no goodnesse to anye man, but wholy acknowledgeth all things to be Gods, from whome as from a fountayne all things doe flowe, in whome at the last all the godly doe rest, with the enioying of felicitie. But if a man haue but a sparke of true loue, the same no doubt, feleth that all earth

True charity described.

Of bearing with other mens faultes.

The .xvi. Chapter.



Those things which no man can amende either in himselfe or in another, he ought to beare patiently, vntill such time as God do determine other wise. Think that perchance it is better so to be for thy tryall and patience, without the which our merites are not greatly to be weyed. Neuer thelesse, thou oughtest for such lettes to make supplication vnto God, that he would vouchsafe to assist thee, that thou mayst take these things well and quietly. If one once or twise admonished doe not as thou wouldest haue him, fall not out with the same partie, but commit the whole cause to God, to the intent that that may be done in all his seruantes, which is agreeable both to his pleasure and honour, who knoweth well how to turne euill vnto good. Endeavour thy selfe to be patient in bearing of all the vices and infirmities of other men, because thy selfe also art diseased with many, which must likewise be suffered of other. If thou canst not fashion thy selfe to be

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be such a one as thou wouldest, how art thou able to frame an other to thy mind? We desire that other men should be perfect, and we in the meane time doe not correct our owne faultes. We will that other men be severely corrected, and we our selues refuse to be corrected. The immoderate licentiousnesse of others doth mislike vs: we our selues in the meane time will not suffer the foyle. Other we will haue to be bydeled with lawes, we our selues doe not suffer our selues any more to be kept vnder. By this it is plaine that we doe not loue another man as we loue our selues. Truly if all were perfect, what should there be that we should suffer at an other mans hande for Gods sake? Now, it hath so seemed good to God that we should learne one of vs to beare the burthens of another, in as much as no man is without fault, no man is without his burthen, no man is sufficient to himselfe, no man is wise inough for himself: but that it is necessary for one of vs to beare with another, to comfort one another, to help one another, to instruct one another, to admonish one another. Now is it more easily declared by occasion of aduersitie, howe vertuous and goodly every man is. For the occasions doe not make a man fragile, but doe shew what

what maner of fellow he is.

Of solitarie life.

The .xviij. Chapter.



Thou must learne to breake thy
 selfe of many thinges, if thou
 wilt maintaine peace and con-
 corde with other: If thou wilt
 stand vp rightly, and come for-
 ward, see thou thinke thy selfe to be but a ba-
 nished man and a Pilgrime vpon the earth.
 Thou must be made a foole for Christs sake,
 if that thou wilt leade a godly lyfe. The gar-
 ment and shorne heade make nothing to the
 purpose: but it is the chaunging of our cor-
 ruptions, and the full mortifying of our old A-
 dam, that causeth a man to be godly in deede.
 He that seeketh anye thing else then mere
 God, and the saluation of his owne soule, the
 same person shall finde naught else but misse-
 ries and sorowes for his laboz. Neither can
 he long time abyde in quietnesse of mynde
 which endeuoreth not to be the least of others
 and to be subiect vnto all men. Thou hast
 come into this life to be a seruant, and not to
 beare rule. Wete that thou art called to suf-
 fer and labour, and not to passe thy tyme in
 idlenesse

He meaneth not
 Monkish
 lyfe.

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ynlenesse and vaine tatteling oz communica-
tion. Men are here tryed as golde in the for-
nace. No man can stand vp right in this life,
but such a one as wylsheth to keepe downe
himselfe in his heart for Gods sake.

Of the examples of godly Fathers.

The .xviiij. Chapter.



Cholde the seruent and zelous
examples of those godly fa-
thers in whom very perfection
& godlinesse of lyfe did glister,
and thou shalt see how slender,
and in a maner nothing at all it is that we
our selues doe perfozme. Alack, what is our
lyfe if it be compared with theirs? Those
godly men and friendes of Christ did serue
the Lorde in hunger and thirst, in colde and
nakednesse, in traueyle and wearynesse, in
watchings and fastings, in prayers and ver-
tuous cogitacions, in many persecutions and
spytfull oblaquies oz reproches. How many
and how greuous miseries did first the Apo-
stles suffer: after them the Martyrs, Confes-
sors, Virgins, and in fine all the other that e-
uer desired to follow the steps of Christ: For
they hated euen their owne soules in this life,
that

that they might keepe the same for lyfe euer-
lasting. O how seuerely, how vnpleasant a life
did those holy Fathers passe ouer in solitari-
nesse: How long and greuous temptacions
did they patiently abide: How many tymes
were they vexed of the enemy: Howe many
and how seruent prayers did they offer vnto
God: With how great seuerity did they shew
themselves continent and chaste: With how
great studie and exceeding loue did they tra-
uayle to come forwarde in ghostly thinges:
howe sharpe warre did they keepe in taming
of their vices: Of howe synccere and byright
minde towarde God were the same endued:
Whylest the daye did last, they laboured in
their vocation: in the night tyme they gaue
themselves to prayer vnto almighty God: &
yet whilst they were at labour, they dyd not
ceasse from the prayers of the minde: to be
short, they employed the whole tyme to pro-
fitable vses, and euery houre occupied in the
contemplation of God, seemed but short: in-
somuch that for the very sweetenesse they had
to thinke on heauenly thinges, they did euen
forget the necessitie of regarding and looking
to their bodies. They renounced all riches,
authorities, honours, friends, kinsfolke, ney-
ther did they couet to enioye anye worldlye
D. J. thing.

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thing. To be short, they scarcely applied necessarie things to the maintenaunce of theyr life, in so much that they were sorre also, thzough very necessitie to become slaues vnto their bodics. Therefore they were poore in earthly things, but in the fauour of God and vertues they were very riche: and being needy outwardly, were inwardly refreshed with the grace and comforts of God. They were deuoted from the worlde, but very neare and familiar friends vnto God: They were both in their owne iudgement of no regarde, and in the sight of the worlde despised persons and abiects: but of God they were accounted very great and excellent. They were constant in true modestie: they liued in simple obedience: they abode still in charity and pacience, and did therefore profite dayly in the spirite, and had great fauour at Gods hand. In fine, they ought to be an erample and spectacle to all godly persons, and more to prouoke vs to go forthwarde manfully, then the multitude of such as are but warme in vertuous life ought for to hinder vs. How great was the seruencie of all the godlye at the beginning of that holy profession of theirs: How great deuotion of prayers: How great emulation of vertue: How straight and severe discipline did raigne

reigne among them: How great reverence
and obedience did flourish in them all under
the rule of their maister: The monuments
yet remanynge doe witnesse, that those men
were holy and perseute in deede, who subdued
the worlde in fighting so stoutly. And now he
is accepted great, so that he offend no lawes,
so that he can pacientlye beare the wrongs
that are done vnto him. O the sluggishnesse
of our time and state, that so soone doe decline
from the olde zeale, and are wearie of life for
saintnesse and warmnesse. Woulde to God
the profitynge in vertues, did not wholly sleepe
in vs, which haue many times seene so many
examples of the godly.

Of the exercises of one that is the
childe of God in deede.

The xix. Chapter



The life of the godly man ought
wholye to excell in all kynde of
vertues, that he may be such a
one inwardly, as he seemeth to
the worlde outwardly: nay ra-
ther, he ought for god cause to be much more
inwardlye then he is seene outwardly. For
that God is he that doth behold vs, whom we
ought

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ought highly to reuerence in what place so euer we be, and to walke in purity and cleanness of lyfe in his sight, after the manner of Angels. We ought euery day to renew our determined purpose of god lyfe, & as though we were turned from sinne vnto god life but this day first of all, euen so to quicken & stirre vp our selfies vnto earnest desire, and to say as followeth: Help me, O my Lord and God, in my good purpose, and holy worshipping or seruing of the: and graunt vnto me to make a perfite entrance and beginning this present day. For that which I haue hitherto done, is nothing at all. Great diligence is needefull for this our purpose of running & coming forward, in case we will rightly bring to an ende that thing which we haue begun. For if he which taketh this businesse in hande valiantly, is yet many times tired withall: what shal that man doe, which beginneth the same but seldome, or vncoustantly? Surelve, the forsaking of our purpose doth chance diuers waies, and the least omitting of spirituall exercises that can be, scarce hapneth without some hinderance and losse. The determination or decre of the lust dependeth vpon Gods fauour, and not vpon their owne wisedome, vnto whome they alwayes trust, what soeuer they

they take in hand. For man in dede doth propose, but God doth dispose. Neither is it in mans hands how the thing that he doth shall fall out in the ende. If the accustomed exercise of our decree or purpose be at anye tyme let passe, eyther for pittie or brotherly profit, the same may some be called back againe: but if it be sleightly given ouer for a time, eyther for tediousnesse or negligence of minde, then is the same a great fault in vs, and is cause of hurt. Though we endenour to the uttermost of our power, yet shall we quickly offende in many thinges. Neuerthelesse, some certaintie must alway be appointed, especialy against those vices which be a let vnto vs aboue the rest. We must aswell search and set in god order and frame the outwarde, as the inward thinges, bicause they are both necessarye to our comming forward in godlynesse. But if thou canst not incontinently call for an account of thy selfe, yet doe it sometime at the least wise, and once every day at the least: namely, either at the morning or at night. At night decree with thy selfe what thou wilt doe in the morning: At night examine thy maners, howe thou hast borne thy selfe in wordes, in dedes, and in thoughtes: for in these thinges perhaps thou hast often

Man doth
propose &
God doth
dispose.

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Of Idleness
nelle com-
meth no
goodnesse.

tymes offended both God and the world.
Arme thy selfe against the wickednesse of the
dennill, as becommeth a stoute fellowe. Beware
of thy gluttonous appetite, and so shall thou
bryde all desire of the flesh the better. Be ne-
uer altogether ydle, but alwaies either reade
or wyte, praye or thinke, or doe something
to the common profite. We must haue re-
spect in vsing of the exercises and tamings of
the body, neither are they to be practised of al
men alike. They ought not to be done abrode
which are not common. For things priuate
are exercised with more safetie at home. Ne-
uerthelesse thou must beware lest thou be
slowe in things that be to be done abrode, &
more ready to thy priuate things: but rather
hauing done thy duetie and vocation, if there
be any further leysure, restore thy selfe home
according as thy professio in godlinesse both
require. All men cannot haue one kinde of ex-
ercise, but diuers exercises, be conuenient for
diuers persons. Againe, diuers exercises doe
please according to the diuersitie of times: as
that some shoulde more like on the holidaies
and some other againe on the working daies.
Some we haue neede of at the time of our
spirituall fight: some againe in the time of
our peace and rest. It doth vs good to thinke
vpon

vpon some thinges whilst we are in heau-
 nesse. And some other thinges it liketh vs to
 occupie our mindes vpon, whilst we are ioy-
 full in the Lorde. Good exercises are to be re-
 newed oftentimes, especially vpon the holpe-
 daies, as though at that time we were depar-
 ting out of this life, and going to the everlas-
 ting holypdaies. Therefore ought we at that
 time to prepare our selues with carefulnesse,
 and to shewe our selues more Godly, and to
 doe Gods commaundements more straight-
 ly, as men that shall receyue rewarde of our
 traueyle at Gods hande ere it be long. But if
 our departure be deferred, let vs beleeue that
 wee are not well prepared, and that wee are
 yet unworthie of so great glorie that is to be
 giuen vnto vs at the certaine and appoynted
 time, & let vs endemour to prepare our selues
 more diligently to our ende. Blessed is that
 seruant (sayth Luke the Euangelist) whome
 the Lorde at his coming shall finde watch-
 ing. Knowe yee this for a certaine, that hee
 shall be made chiefe ouer all his goddes.

Of the loue of solitarinesse and silence.

The xx. Chapter.

D. itij.

Sche

The Imitation of Christ.



Take for an apt and convenient time to be at leysure, and think oftentimes vpon Gods benedictions : and letting passe curious things, be oftentimes reading of such matters as the minde may rather be pricked, or stirred by withall, than occupied. For if thou shalt withdraw thy selfe from superfluous communication, and from ydle gadings about, & also from hearing of strange things and rumors, thou shalt finde both leysure sufficient, and also convenient ynough for the exercising of good thoughts. Even so the godlyest sort did shun the conversation of the worlde, (when they might conveniently) and did desire rather to hye separatelye to depart vnto God. A certayne man sayd: As oft as I have beene among men, I haue returned home a man lesse than I was before. For we haue proue of this thing manye times, when we babble togither anye long time. It is an easier matter altogether to hold ones peace, than not to passe a measure in his wordes. It is an easier matter to keepe at home closely, than to keepe him vprightlye abroad from sinning. Therefore, who so striveth to come to inboarde and spirituall things, he must decline from pzease and multitude with Christ
Jesus.

Such
talke can-
seth Sinne.

Iesus. No man commeth abroade safely, but
 he which keepeth at home willingly. No man
 ruleth safely, but he which is subject willing-
 ly. No man commaundeth safely, but he
 which hath learned to obey gladly. No man
 reioyceth safely, but he which hath y^e testimo-
 ny of a good conscience. No man speaketh
 safely, but he which keepeth silence gladly.
 Neuerthelesse, the securitie and quietnesse of
 the vertuous, hath alwayes bene full of the
 feare of God: neither haue they bene the lesse
 carefull and humble of spirite, although they
 did excell in great vertues & heauenly gifts.
 But the securitie of the wicked hath come of
 pride and haughtinesse, and at length is turned
 to the deceyving of themselves. Neuer pro-
 mise vnto thy selfe safety in all things, whilst
 thou livest in this worlde, though thou seeme
 godly and a despiser of worldly things. Many
 times hath it happened that they haue bene in
 great danger for their overmuch confidence
 and presumption, which by the iudgement of
 the world were counted better than other
 men. By which it is brought to passe that for
 many it is more profitable, not wholly to be
 void of temptacions, but often to be tempted,
 least perhaps they being to carelessse, should
 be puffed vp with pride, or least thereby they
 should be

The pro-
 perties of
 a good man.

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22
 Should run the more licenciously to outward
 comforts. But if a man would neuer seeke
 love at the worlde, if he would neuer make
 noz meddle with the worlde: God I O R D
 how vnspotted a conscience should he ever
 more retaine and keepe? If a man would cut
 off all vaine carefulnesse, and thinke only vpon
 on soule health and heauenly matters, & put
 his whole trust in God onely: O Lorde how
 great peace and quietnesse should the same
 partie enjoy? No man is worthy of heauenly
 lye comfort, but he which shall exercise hym
 selfe diligently in the godly taming of hym
 selfe: which taming of thy selfe, if thou wouldest
 come vnto, get into thy Chamber, and
 shut out the tumults or fires of the worlde
 like as it is written. Ponder ye vpon these
 thinges in your Chambers closely and secretly.
 Thou shalt manye tymes fynde in thy
 Cell of Cloister, that which thou shalt forgoe
 abroad. Thy Cell being continually frequen
 ted, weary thyselfe: the same againe being
 negligently used, is cause of tediousnesse. But
 if at the beginning of the amendment of lyfe
 thou shalt tightlye frequent the same, and
 shalt keepe thy selfe therein, at length it will
 fall out that nothing shall be more pleasant
 vnto thee, nothing more full of comfort. In
 silence

silence and quietnesse both the Godly soule with silence
 goe so:warde, and both learne the mysteries both the
 of the Scriptures. In them he findeth whole godly soule
 floods of teares, with the which he may euery learne the
 night washe and make cleane himselfe, to be mysteries
 come so much the more familiar to hys Cre- of the
 ator, the farther of he liueth from all careful- scripture.
 nesse of the worlde. Therefore that person
 that withdraweth himselfe from his acquaint-
 tance and friends, is resorted vnto of God
 himselfe and of his holy Angels. It is bet-
 ter to lye closet, and to haue regarde vnto a
 mans owne saluation, than with the cōtempt
 of himselfe euen to worke miracles. Laudable
 it is to be goodly, better yett to be goodly
 to be seene, to be unwilling also to see
 other menne. Why desirest thou to see that
 which is not lawfull for thee to haue and en-
 ioye? The worlde perissheth, and the desires
 thereof: the lasses of pleasure doe allure to
 roauing abroad: but after the tyme is once
 past, what good hast thou gotten thereby, but
 lesse it be deepe repentance, and bayne wan-
 dring about of the soule? A merrie goyng
 forth is oftentimes cause of a sorrowfull re-
 turning: and a ioyfull Evening watch doth
 cause a sad Morning. Thus the whole ioye
 of the fleshe doth enter in wyth a flatterynge
 counte-

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This con-
templation
is had in
naturall
philosophie.

The du-
tye of a
christian
man.

countenance: but at length it nippeth and
flapeth. What canst thou see else where: that
thou mayest not beholde here in thy Cell
Loe, where the Heauen and the Earth and
all the Elementes are. For of these are all
things created. What canst thou see any
where that doth long endure: as by a heyng
Perchance thou thinkest to be satisfied with
such contemplation: but that shalt thou ne-
uer attaine vnto. If thou couldest beholde
presently euen all things that ruer are, what
shouldest thou see else but a house of spectacle and
light: A life on thine eyes aloft vnto God, and
crave pardons for thy finnes, and offences.
Come ouer haue thynges vnto haue per-
sones, and haue thou thy selfe aboute those
which God doth commaunde to meddle
in. Shut thy selfe close within thy house
and call thy beloved Iesus vnto thee. Abide
still with him in thy selfe: for elsewhere that
thou neuer fynde so great peace. If thou had-
dest not gone a broode: nor hearde any rum-
mours of thynges thou shouldest sooner haue
continued still in quiet peace. Now, seeing
that it doth sometime delyte thee to heare no-
uelties, it falleth out that thou muste be
fayne to heare the trouble and inquietnesse
of the soule.

Of Chastising thy soule, and keeping
the same in awe.

The xxii. Chapter.



If thou wylte any thyng come
forwarde, hold fast the feare of
God, and bee not ouer dissolute
or retchellse, but keepe in all
thy powers vnder discipline:
and yelde not thy selfe vppre to bayne and
transitorie ioye of the woylde. Addiſte thy
selfe to a correcting and chastising of thy
soule, wherby thou shalt finde godlynesse.
Great is the commoditie of such chastise-
ment and exercyse, which slothfulnesse and
sluggerdy is wont soone to destroy. A wonder
it is that any man can euer reioyce truly in
this world, which considereth and waileth the
rowly hys owne banishment, and so manye
daungers of his soule. For the lacke of due
consideration, and by meanes of our dulnesse
we doe not feele the sorowes of our minde in
our offences: but many times doe laugh with
lightnesse, when rather we had good cause to
weepe, if we did loke well vnto it. There is
no true libertie or substantiall ioye in anye
thing, sauing in the feare of God ioynd with
a good

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a good conscience. Happie is the man that is able to cast away the impediments and lets of all worldly thynges, and yelde himselfe wholly to the chastning of hys soule. Happie is he that renounceth and putteth from hym whatsover may staine and burthen his conscience. Fight like a man: Custome is mastered wyth custome. If thou canst perswade thy selfe not to meddle in other mens matters, they likewise shall not haue to doe with thync. Procure not thy selfe another mans charge, or inuolap not thy selfe with the causes of thy betters. Haue chiefly thine eyes alwayes bent vpon thy selfe, and admonishe or warne thy selfe more than all other of thy deare friendes besides are wont. If thou be voyde of the fauour and good will of men, doe not admonishe thy selfe wyth an euill wyll, but rather take it grieuouly that thou doest not so wel and circumspectly behaue thy selfe as it becommeth the seruant of God and the person vertuous in deede. It is both more profytable and more safe for a man manye times to haue few comforts in this life, especially worldly: for in that wee epyther haue not, or doe seldome seele such comforts as God doth minister: we our selues are therefore to blame, which neither seeke after the prickles of

of conscience, noꝛ yet wholly cast away baïne
and outward comforts. **W**rite thou wel that
thou art not onely vnwoꝛthy of diuine com-
foꝛt, but also woꝛthie of great myserie. If a
man be at any time pꝛicked with the true so-
rowes of heart, it commeth to passe thereby
that the whole woꝛlde is bitter and pꝛekesome
vnto him. The good man findeth sufficient
causes to bee soꝛꝛe and to weepe oꝛ mourne:
Foꝛ whether he consider himself, oꝛ else looke
vpon an other man, he seeth that no body ly-
ueth wythout calamitie in this woꝛlde; and
the moꝛe deēply he considereth hymselfe, so
much the moꝛe grieuouſlye both hee soꝛꝛowe.
Now, the causes of due soꝛꝛow and pꝛicke of
conscience are our owne sinnes and vices, in
the which we doe so lie weltred and wrapped,
that we are seldome times able to behold the
heauenly things. If thou woꝛldest moꝛe of-
tentimes muse vpon thy death, than thinke
vpon longnesse of lyfe, there is no doubt but
that thou woꝛldest woꝛke the amendement
of thy selfe the moꝛe earnestlye. Agayne, if
thou woꝛldest thꝛoughly waye in thy minde
the toꝛmentes that shall be in hell, gladly I
thinke thou woꝛldest sustaine labour and soꝛ-
rowe, and woꝛldest not be aſearde of any se-
ueritie and ſtreightnesse applied to thy selfe.

But

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But bicause those things are not suffered to sincke deeply into our mindes, and for that we are yet in loue with flattering shewes of the worlde, it hapneth that we continue still to remaine colde and dolt, many times poore and needie of the spirite of God, whereby our wretched bodie taketh occasion quickly to complaine and mone. Wherefore make thy prayer vnto God with humblenelle of heart, that he will stirre vp his heauenly sparkes and motions in thy soule, and saye thus wyth that Prophete: Feede me, O Lord, with the bread of teares, and wash away my Cup with mourning.

The consideration of mans miseries.

The xxij. Chapter.



Thou art a wretch, wher soeuer thou bee, and whither soeuer thou turne thy self, vnlesse thou turne thy selfe vnto GOD. Wherefore art thou troubled or disquieted when things frame not according to thy harts desire? What is he vnto whome all things fall out as he wisheth? It is not I, it is not thou, it is not any man liuing beside: I say, there is no man lyuing voyde of all calamitie

lamittie and traueple: no not the King, no not
 the Pope himsele. Who is then in the best
 case of all others: euen he that is able to suf-
 fer some thing for Gods sake. Most of them
 that are weakelings and fraile doe common-
 ly say: Ah, see how happily he lyueth yonder,
 how welthy he is, how mightie he is, in how
 great honour he is, what a big man he is,
 what a well fauoured man he is. But looke
 thou vpon the heauenly good things, and thou
 shalt see that all these good thinges of this
 mortall life are nothing to be accounted of,
 bring altogether vncertayne & burdensome,
 as the which we neuer doe possesse without
 carefulnesse and feare. The felicitie of man
 doth not consist in the plentie of such maner
 of good things: but rather a measure ought
 to be sufficient vnto him therein. For to lyue
 bent vnto the earth, is very miserie in deede.
 The more diuine or heauenlye that euery
 man doth conet himselfe to be, so much doth
 this life become the more vnplesant vnto
 him: to waite, the more he both feelth and
 clearly seeth the offences of mans corruption,
 For to eate, to drinke, to watch, to sleepe, to
 rest, to traueple, and to be subiect to all the o-
 ther necessities of nature, is vnfainedly great
 miserie and calamitie to the godlye person,

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who coneteth to be set free and at libertie from
all manner of sinne. For grievously is a man
pessed downe with the necessities of the bo-
die in this lyfe : and therefore doth the Pro-
phet make humble prayer in these wordes to
be deliuered from them : O Lorde, drawe me
out of my necessities. But wretched are they
that knowe not their owne miseries : and a-
gayne moze wretched, which do loue this mi-
serie and mortall lyfe, which some doe so far
embrace (wheras neuertheloffe through their
traueyle and carefulnesse they can scant yet
get themselves but necessarie thinges) that
if they might liue here ever moze, they would
passe nothing at all on the kingdome of God.
O mad braynes and faithlesse persons, who
lie drowned so deeply in the earth, that (lyke
wretches) they haue naught else in their
minde but carnall thinges, and shall once at
the length feele, not without torment, howe
vile and nothing it is that they haue loued so
much. But those good men of God and all the
vettuous sort, as many as euer were christis
frendes, did not looke vpon those thinges that
did please the fleshe, or that did make a goodly
shew for this present tyme, but with all hope
and griefnesse did breath to enclassing good
thinges, and with their whole heart were ca-

The ende
of carnall
things.

ried

ried vnto the highest and the inuisible things,
 least they should be drawen down to the low-
 est things through the leue of the visibie. O
 brother, do not dispayre in coming forward
 in godly thinges. As yet thou hast tyme and
 space: why then dost thou put of thy purpose
 from day to day? Arise and begin out of hand,
 and reason thus with thy selfe: now is the
 time to be doing: now is the time to be sigh-
 ting: now is the time to repent and amende
 thy life. In roughnesse & aduersity is the time
 to deserue. Thou must passe through fire and
 water befoze thou come vnto refreshing and
 comfort: Except thou minister violence vnto
 thy selfe, thou shalt not maister sinne. So long
 as we beare about this frayle bodie of ours,
 we can not liue without irkesomnesse and so-
 row. In dede we would faine haue rest fro
 all wretchednesse: but bicause through sinne
 we haue lost our innocency, we haue also for-
 gone our true happinesse and felicitie. Ther-
 fore we must hold vs still vnto pacence, and
 awaite for the mercy of God, til such time as
 vnrighconnesse passe away, and this morta-
 lite of ours be swallowed bp of iyse. **Lorde**
God, how great is mans frailty, which ever
 more is prone vnto sinning: This day thou
 confessest thy sinnes, and hauing confessed the

No time
 to late, to
 repent &
 amende
 thy life.

Manne
 frailtye
 prone vn-
 to sinne,

C. ij.

same,

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same, to morow thou comittest them againe.
Nowe presently thou determinest to beware
and take heede: and within an houre after, thy
doings be such, as though thou hadst not de-
termined at all. Therefore great cause haue
we to keepe vnder our selues, and neuer to
haue anye great good lyking of our selues,
which are so fraile & vnconstant. It may also
be sone lost with negligēce which with much
trauelle hath scantyly bene attayned by the
help of God. What shall become of vs at the
last, that do war warme so sone? Who be to vs
that thus traueile vnto rest, as though there
were peace & securitie already, when as no to-
ken of true godlinesse doth yet appeare in our
condicions. Surely we haue neede to be in-
structed vnto good maners afresh againe like
yong beginners, if happily there be any hope
of amendment and greater profitting in hea-
uenly things.

Of the meditacion of death.

The xxxij. Chapter.

Mans life
compared
to a flower.



Seeing thy life shall haue an end
so quickly, loke wel about thee.
Man flourisheth to day: to mo-
row he is no where, and being
taken out of the sight of the
worlde,

woulde, is by & by also forgotten of the same;
 A blockishnesse and hardnesse of mans hart,
 which thinking only vpon things present, hath
 no regard to that that shall come after. Thou
 oughtest in such wise to behaue thy selfe in al,
 both deede and thought, as though thou were
 ready to die by and by. If thou haddest a good
 conscience, thou wouldest not much feare
 death. Better it is to beware of sinne, than
 to die death. If thou bee not in a readinesse to
 day, how wilt thou be ready to morrow? The
 daye following is vncertaine: How knowest
 thou whether thou shalt lyue till to morrowe
 or no? What prenapleth it to līue a great
 while, when we be so little amended in oure
 liues? Surely long lyfe doth not alwayes
 make a man better: Nay oftentimes it in-
 creaseth sinne. Woulde to God we had beha-
 ued our selues well in this life but one dayes
 space. Many doe reckon the yeares of their a-
 mendment & repentaunce, when oftentimes
 the scatte therof is but slender. If it be a ter-
 rible thing to die, perchance it is a more
 perillous thing to līue any longer. Happie is
 he that hath euer more the houre of his death
 before his eyes; and frameth himselfe euer ye-
 day to die. If thou hast euer seene a man dye,
 thinke that thou must passe the same way to.

Death not
to be fea-
red, but
sinne to be
eschewed.

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No man
can war-
rant hys
life one
power.

Be in doubt in the Morning whether thou shalt live till the Evening: And againe, at night be ascard to promise thy selfe lyfe tyll Morning: and alwayes be in such a readynesse, and live in such sorte, that death maye neuer fynde thee vnprouided. Manye die suddenly, and when they looke not for it: for the sonne of man will come when we thinke not of his comming. When as that last houre shall come, thou shalt begin to thinke much otherwise of the whole life passed, then thou didst before, & shalt be in deepe sorrow and bewynesse for that thou hast bene so negligent and so slacke. O happye and wise man, who endeavourerth now to be such a one in hys lyfe, as he wylleth to be founde at the time of hys death. For the perfitte contempt of the world, the earnest desire of comming forward in vertue, the love of discipline or good forme of living, the labour of repentance, the ready mind to obey, the deniall of himselfe, and the suffering of euery calamitie for the love of Christ, are cause of great hope to die wel and happily. Thou art able to doe many thynges well whilst thou art in health: but being sick I knowe not what thou shalt be able to doe. For we are made better through sickness, & they that desire of the amendement of their life

life vntill that time; are seldome times made Gods seruants. Better it is to repent, and to liue so now whilst thou mayest, as after thou mayest liue for ever. Otherwise, if thou forgo this occasion and oportunitie, thou shalt afterwarde seek for it to late: and the tyme shall be when perhaps thou shalt in vaine desire to haue no more but one daye & one houre to amende thy lyfe. Therefore bestirre thy selfe, and wey deeply from how great danger thou shalt be rid: how great a mischief thou mayest auoyde, if thou alwayes warily foresee death. Endeuer so now to presentlye to liue, that at the houre of thy death thou mayest rather reioyce than bee asearde. Learne now to die to the worlde, that then thou mayest liue with Christ: Learne now to contemne all things, that then thou mayest freely passe forward vnto Christ: Subdue thy body now with repentance and amendment of life, that thou mayest haue assured confidence and trust in Christ. Ah foole, wherfore dost thou think that thou shalt liue long, seeing thou hast no warrant for one day here? How many haue bene deceyued, and taken out of the worlde sodainly? How many times hast thou heard it spoken? He was slayne with the Sworde: that man was drowned in the water: That

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man fell downe and broke his neck: He dyed
 with meate in his mouth: He ended his lyfe
 in playing: another with fire, another wyth
 sworde, another wyth plague or pestilence,
 another was slayne of theues: Thus death
 is the ende of all: and the life of men passeth
 away like a certaine shadow. Who shall help
 thee when thou art deade; if thou forgo the
 occasion when thou art alivē? Now, nowe
 I say, it is time to be doing, whilst both thou
 art ignorant of the houre of death, and
 mayest also safely looke to thy selfe against the
 time to come: Whilst thou hast time, heape
 vp vnto thy selfe many tall ryches, & thinke
 vppon nothing else but vppon thy saluation,
 and passe onely vpon heavenly things. Pro-
 cure thee friends now, that may receiue thee
 when thou art dead into everlasting taber-
 nacles: Become a Pilgrime and stranger
 on the earth, as vnto whome worldly busi-
 nesse doth nothing belong: Haue a soule free
 and lyfted vppward vnto god, seeing thou hast
 no long dwelling or abode in this life: Dy-
 rect thy Prayers and dayly sighyngs al-
 wyth teares vnto that place, and
 that thy spirit after death
 may blessedly sit in
 to God.

Of

Of the last iudgement of God and punishment of sinners.

The xxiiij. Chapter.

In all things haue an eye to the ende, and after what sort thou shalt stande before that seuerie Iudge, from whom nothing is hid, who neither is pacified with bribes, nor alloweth unreasonable excuses, but doth iudge according to vprightnesse and truth. O wretched & foolish art thou, O thou sinfull man: what answer wilt thou make vnto almighty God, which knoweth all thy sinnes, who sometimes feareth the countenance of an angrie man: why dost thou not looke vnto thy self against the day of that iudgement, wherein no body can be excused or defended by his Attorney: for every man shall haue ynough to answer for himselfe. Nowe is thy labor profitable if thou list, now is thy mourning accepted, now may thy sighing be harde, and thy repentance pacifie God, and purge thy selfe. And wholy is the patient man purged after a healthful sort, who receiving iniury, is more sorry for the wickednesse of an other man, than for the wrong that is done

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done vnto himselfe, and gladly craueth pardon
for his enemies, and forgiveth them with his
hart, and doth not slacke or fellowship the time
himselfe to aske forgiveness of them: and so-
nner pittie than is angrie, and oftentimes
doth vse violence and compulsion to his owne
selfe, and endeuoreth to make his flesh who-
lye subiect vnto the spirite. Now these things
are not to be dypten off from time to time,
but must be practised in this life, and that al-
so quickly. Nowbeit, we surely doe deceyue
our selues through the inordinate loue of
our flesh. I pray you what else shall that fire
burne than sinnes? The more thou shalt
now favourably paelde vnto thy selfe, & shalt
obey thy flesh, so much the more grievous
punishment shalt thou suffer afterwarde,
and so much the more plentifull matter shalt
thou heape vp to thy selfe to be burned. For
looke in what things every man hath sinned,
in the same shall he be punished againe, accor-
ding to the greatnesse of the sinne. There
shall the slothfull be pricked with hote bur-
ning prickes. There shall the Gluttons be
tormented with yetter hunger and thirst.
There shall the lecherous and louers of plea-
sures be bathed in burning pitch and fire.
King Byrnstone. There shall the enuious
holle

holde out like mad Dogges, and every vice
shall bee punished wth thys owne tozment.
There shall the proud be ouerwhelmed with
all repporhe and rebuke, & the conetous per-
sons shall be bered with most myserable nee-
dinesse. To be shor^te: there one houre of pu-
nishment shall be moze tedpous and payne-
full, than was a long time here in the bette-
ryng of our manners. There the wretches
haue no rest, no comfort: but here yet is
somewhat a pau^se of sorow, and the com-
forting of our friendes doth quiet our hearts.
Wherefoze be carefull now, and be soze for
thy sinnes, that in the day of that iudgement
thou mayest safely reioyce wth the blessed.
For then shall the iust stand wth great con-
fiance agaynst those of whome they haue
bene bered and oppressed: Then shall he sit
as Judge, which nowe humblye submyt-
teth hym selfe to the iudgement of men:
Then shall the poore and modest person bee
of great sayth and trust, whylest the proude
be in feare altogether: Then shall he seme
to haue bene wise in this lyfe, which learned
to be a foole and an a biest for Christ his sake.
Then shall their remembrance of miserie pa-
tiently suffereth, be pleasant, when as all the
w^righteous in the meane time shal be mute
and

The Imitation of Christ.

and silent : Then shall all the godly reioyce,
& all the vngodly shall mourne and soe adme.
Then shall the man that before was bered,
more triumph & reioyce, then if he had beene
brought vp in continuall dainties : then shall
coarse apparell glister, and fine garments be
dimmed and disgraced : Then shall the poore
cottage be more praysed, then is now the gilt-
ed Pallace : Then shall constant patience
helpe more, then all the power of the world :
Then shall simple obedience be more extol-
led, then all the subteltie of men : Then shall
a cleane and good conscience more reioyce a
man, then learned philosophie : Then shall the
contempt of riches be of greater price, then
the whole treasure of all the worlde : Then
shall godly prayer cause greater comfort be
to thee, then the eating of dainty meates :
Then shalt thou more reioyce for keeping of
silence, than for long babling : Then thy
Godly deedes shall be of more power, than
abundant eloquence : Then shall strait
lyfe and austeritie in correcting of maner
be more pleasant, than all earthly delecta-
on. Wherefore, learne now to suffer for all
trifles, that then thou mayst be able to be de-
livered from the heauier burthens. Examine
before in this lyfe, what afterwarde thou
canst

canst well abyde. And in case thou canst not now beare so small things, howe shalt thou bee able then to suffer enerlasting torments? And if now so little a payne doe make thee impacient, what will Hell fyre then make thee? For surely thou mayest not bee twyse happye or blessed, both to enioye pleasures in thys lyfe, and afterwarde to reygne also wyth Christ in Heauen. And now, put case thou hast hytherto lyued in continuall honour and pleasures: what good shoulde all these things haue done thee, if it had chaunced thee to dye out of hande? Doest thou not see that all thinges are but vaine, beside the loue and the seruice of God onely? For he that loueth God wyth all hys heart, the same feareth neither death nor punishment, nor iudgement, nor Hell: bicause perfite loue doth make safe accesse to almighty God. But it is no wonder if he feare death and iudgement, which yet taketh delpte in sinne. Notwithstanding it is expedient, if loue doe not yet reclayne thee from euill, that the feare of Hell fyre doe at least wyse bydle thee. But he that refuseth the feare of God, the same person can not long continue in godnesse, but runneth quickly into the trappes and snares of the Demill.

The Imitation of Christ.

Of the zealous amendment of our
whole lyfe.

The .xxv. Chapter.

Man's
duetie to=
wardes
God, and
wherunto
he was or=
dayned,
aptly de=
scribed.



Be watchful and diligent in the
seruice of God, and consider
wherunto thou wast ordeyned,
and for what cause thou hast
giuen ouer the world: namely,
that thou mightest liue vnto God, & become
an heavenly person. Therfore be seruent to
come forward: For thou shalt shortly receiue
the rewarde of thy traueyles, neyther shall
there be any feare or sorow afterward with
in thy boundes or limits. A little whiles shalt
thou now labour and so shalt finde great rest
nay rather continuall ioy. If thou wilt shew
thy selfe faithfull or nimble still in doing, God
vndoubtedly will declare himselfe faithfull &
bountifull in rewarding. Flourishe inwardly
a good hope to obtaine the victorie: but reche-
lesseesse must be avoided, least thou be blunt
and dull, or else doe ware proud. There was
sometime a certaine man, which carefullye
tossed betwene feare and hope, dyd humbly
say thus, whilst he was in praying: O chael
knew certainly that I should perseuere: And
so, thy

fozthwith he hard this aunswere from GOD
within himselfe in his owne soule: And what
then if thou diddest know it? Wouldest thou
willingly doe it? Go to then doe nowe but as
thou wouldest thē haue done, & haue thou no
doubt of perseuerance. He being fozthwith cō-
firmed with this comfort, did cōmit himselfe
to the wil of GOD, & so ceased his careful doubt-
fulnesse, neither woulde he curiously search,
what should become of him, but rather ende-
uored to seeke out what thing was conueni-
ent vnto the will of GOD, and acceptable and
perseuer vnto the same, to begin and finishe wel
dōing. Put thy trust in the Lord, and do well,
saith the Prophet, and thou shalt inhabite the
earth, and shalt be fed with the plentie therof.
One thing there is that witholdeth manye
men from comming fozwarde and from ser-
uent coꝛrection of the miselues: The horrible-
nesse of the difficultie of it, and the traueyle of
the fight and combat. Surely they doe most of
all other come fozward in vertues, which en-
deuour with their powers to conquere most
griuous things, and such as are most of all
contrarie vnto the miselues. For every man
doth come fozwarde so much the better, and
obtaine the moze ample grace of god, as that
the moze he overcommieth and subdueth him-
selfe

The Imitation of Christ.

selfe by Gods helpe. But a like power is not
 in all men to ouercome and mortifie them-
 selues : howbeit, the same that shal the more
 diligently p̄tch forward this worke, it is euen
 he that shal be sturdier or stronger to moue
 forth effectuallye, (though he must beare the
 mothings patiently) than an other, otherwise
 well ynough fashioned of nature, & yet some-
 what sluggish to vertue. Nowe, two thinges
 there are chiefly that make much for men to
 the amendement of themselves : that is, to
 withdrawe themselves violently from those
 thinges, vnto which our corrupt nature is
 prone : and againe, to apply our selues with
 tooth & naylor vnto that good thing whereof we
 haue neede. Againe, thou must especially take
 heed of those thinges, & maister them which
 doe most of all, and most often misleade thee
 in other men. If ynde the meanes that thou
 mayest take commoditie and aduantage of
 all thinges : that in case thou se before thine
 eyes, or heare of any examples of wel doing,
 that be kindled and prouoked to doe the lyke.
 But if thou perceyue any thing worthe thy
 prayse, take heed that thy selfe doe not the
 lyke : or if at anye tyme thou hast so done,
 quickly endeuoꝝ to amende thy selfe. As
 as thou hast thine eyes bent vpon other men,

we ought
 to correct
 our selues
 and not
 other.

euen

euēn so haue other men likewise their eyes bent vppon thee. Howe pleasaunt and swēte a thing is it to beholde zealous and Godlye Christians well nurtured, and obedyent to the dyscipline of Christ? And agayne, howe sorrowfull and grieuous a thyng is it to see men lyuing inordinately, and not exercising those things wherevnto they are called? how greatly hurtefull is it to forsake the purpose of thy calling, and to bende thy selfe to those things which are no poynt of thy charge? Be myndfull of thy purpose or profession, and set the remembraunce of Christ crucified before thine eyes: & when thou beholdest his lyfe, be ashamed of thy selfe, y^e hast not all thys while shewed thy selfe more diligent in following of Christ his steppes, whereas neuerthelesse thou hast a long time professed a Christian lyfe. Surely, if the Godly person doe practise hymselfe attentiuely and wyth bent studie vppon that most holy lyfe of Iesus, and the toymments of his passion, the same shall there plentifully finde all thyngs profitable and necessary for him: Neyther is it needefull for him to seeke for anye better thyng beside Iesus Christ. If Iesus crucified might enter into our hart, how soone and sufficiently should we become learned: A feruent and zealous

we ought
to followe
our voca-
tion or call-
ing.

The Imitation of Christ.

Christian man doth, and beareth wyth facy-
litie that which hee is commaunded : but if
the same partly be negligent and but warm,
he then is pressed downe with calamities by-
pon calamities, and is vexed rounde aboute
wyth anguyshe and sorrowes : bycause hee is
both voyde of inwarde comfort, and also for-
bidden to seeke after the outwarde comfort.
And whosoever at all doth go out of the bound-
des of the discipline of Christ, the same is
subiect to a greuous fall : and hee that see-
keth for a more loose and slacke lyfe, the same
is alwayes vexed and tormented, bycause
there is evermore somewhat that maye mys-
lyke him. Set before thee rather that streight
life and full of Godlinesse of those holy Apo-
stles and Disciples of Christ, and make thy
reckening to follow their steps : and as tou-
ching the good will of God towarde thee, put
no doubts but he will readily graunt strength
vnto thee for those thinges. By thys meanes
thou shalt become full of strength and hope :
By this meanes thou shalt with an heavenly
gate so traueyle thyther, that thou mayest de-
spise all worldly thinges. And would to God
we had nothing else at all to doe and to trou-
ble vs, but to prayse God wyth our whole
heart and mouth, and to doe his commaun-
dements.

dements. Would to God we being free from all worldly affaires, would care only for heavenly things: for after that man is once come to that point, that he seeketh for comfort of no worldly thing: then at the length it cometh to passe, that God doth begin in deede to smatter and saue him: and that he taketh all things in good worth, howsoever they fall out: and neyther in prosperitie is puffed up with gladnesse, nor yet in afflictions is disgraced with heauinesse, but committeth himselfe altogether wyth confidence vnto God, which is all in all, vnto whome nothing perisheth or dyeth, but all things doe liue and are obedient at his beck or call, without any delay. Looke euer to thine ende, and remember well that lost time shall neuer returne againe: thou shalt neuer attaine vnto vertue surely wythout carefulnesse and diligence. And if it shall chaunce thee to waie warme, thou shalt still be in case worse and worse: but if thou wilt applie thy worke wyth a zealous Soule, thou shalt finde perfite peace, and shalt feele thy labour to be more slight, both for the fauor of God towards thee & also for thyne own loue of vertue. A seruent and diligent man is readye to all thinges. It is greater laboꝝ to resist vices & troubles

Careful-
nesse and
diligence
is way to
vertue.

The Imitation of Christ.

some affections of the mynde, than to sweate
with bodily labors. And he that auoydeth not
small offences, the same by lyttle and lyttle,
falleth into greater faultes. Thou shalt al-
wayes reioyce at night, if thou hast bestowed
the daye fruitfully: watch vnto thine owne
selfe, stirre vp and admonish thine owne selfe,
despise not thyne one selfe, whatsoener
at any time doth happen vnto other
men. So much good shalt
thou doe herein, after as
thou shalt enforce and
compell thy
selfe.

(:.)



The

The seconde Booke.

37

Of the Inwarde life of Man.

The first Chapter.



HE Kingdome of GOD is within you: (saith the Lord.)

Turne thy selfe wyth thy whole hart to the Lord, forsaking this wretched worlde and thy soule shall finde rest.

Leare to contemne outward thinges, and to giue thy selfe to the inwarde things, & so shalt thou see the Kingdome of God to come into thee. For the kingdome of God is peace and ioye in the holy Ghost, which is not gyuen to the godlesse or wicked. Christ will come vnto thee to giue thee his comfort, so that thou wilt prouide him a dwelling place meete for hym within thee. For the whole beantie and brauerie thereof remayneth within: there is hee willingly conuersant: he maketh often repaire to the inwarde man. To the inwarde man he hath swete communication, acceptable comfort, much peace, singuler familiaritie. Come of thou faithfull soule, & prepare thy heart vnto thys Bridegrome, to thintent he may vouchsafe to come vnto thee and in-

habite

habite

The Imitation of Christ.

habite withim thee. For thus he sayth. If any man loue me, the same will keepe my sayings, and I and my father will come vnto him, and dwell wyth him. Therefore giue a place vnto Christ, denying to all other any entraunce vnto thee: If thou shalt haue him thy guest, thou shalt then be ryche and welthie. He will loke vnto thee, and so faithfully doe all thine affayres, that there shall be no neede for thee to put thy hope in men, for men are quickly altered, and swiftly bzeake frendship: but Christ abideth stil by it for euer, and is a con-
stant helpe vnto his scruaunts vnto the very ende. There is neither great trust nor assurance to bee put in a frayle & mortall man, though he be profitable and thy deare frend: neither must thou greatly be sozry, if the same at sometime withstande thee & gaine say thee. Possible it is that those which be on thy side to daye, be to morrow against thee, and so contrarielye (bicause they are often altered like the winde.) Put thy whole trust and confidence in the Lorde & so demeane thy selfe that thou mayest feare him, and that thou mayest loue him. He it is that wil handle thy cause aright & set the same in verie good order. Thou hast no permanent dwelling place and aboade in this life: but whersoever thou become thou art

Thereby-
uing of
Christ in-
to thy hart
is the grea-
test riches
thou canst
obtaine.

art but a sojournier and a trauciler, that shall neuer attaine to rest, vntil thou be nighly ioyned with Christ. Why dost thou gaze about thee here, seeyng thys is not the place of thy rest? Thy dwellyng ought to bee in heauenlye thynges, and all thynges earthly must be looked vpon by the way onely: that is, how al things doe passe and vanishe, and thou lyke wyse wyth the same. Beholde them in such wise that thou doe not cleaue fast vnto them, least thou being entrapped, doe perishe. Let thy thoughts be directed vnto almighty God, & call vpon Christ Iesus wyth praisers wythout intermission and ceasing. If thou canst not tell how to occupie thy minde in the contemplation of hygh and heauenlye thynges, yett rest or staye in the passion of Christ, and dwell gladly vpon his woundes. For if thou shalt relygiouselye sye to those healthsome woundes and stripes of Christ, thou shalt feele a great strengthing in thy aduersitie, and shalt not much passe vppon the contempt of men, but shalt with facilitie beare their false and craftie accusatiens. Christ himselfe in the worlde was taken but for an abiect among men, and was in the myddest of his rebukes forsaken of his acquaintaunce and friends, at his greatest neede. Christ hymselfe woulde

J. iij.

suffer

Man's
thoughts
ought to
be directed
vnto God.

The Imitation of Christ.

suffer and be despised : and wilt thou dare to
complaine and moane for any thing : Christ
had aduersaries and euill repozters : & wylt
thou haue all men to be thy friends, & speake
well of thee : Howe shall thy pacience bee ex-
ercised, if no aduersitye shall happen vnto
thee : If thou wylte suffer nothyng that is
contrarpe vnto thee, howe wylt thou be the
friend of Christ : Thou must suffer aduersi-
tye both wyth Christ and for Christ, if thou
wilt raigne wyth Christ. If thou hast true-
ly entred but once into the bowels of Christ,
and hadst but a little tasted of the seruencie
of hys loue, thou wouldest not onely nothyng
passe vppon thine owne commodities or in-
commodities, but also wouldest reioyce at
thyne infamy or flander. For the loue of
Jesus causeth a man to contemne hymselfe.
I say the louer of Jesus, and the true inward
man, and one boyde of inordinate desires, is
able freely to turne hymselfe vnto God, & be-
ing lifted vp in spirite aboue hymselfe, to en-
ioy the same God quietly. He which wayeth
all things as they be in deede, and not as they
be called or supposed, the same is truly wise,
and rather taught at Gods hande than of
men. Hee that can tell how to lyne inward-
lye, and lyttle to waye outward thynges,
the

The loue
of Iesus
causeth a
manne to
contemne
hymselfe.

the same doth neyther requyre places, nor yet looke after tymes, to practyse hys religious or Godly exercyses. The inward man doth quickly call home hymselfe, bycause he neuer outwardely sheweth what hee is altogether. The outward labour is no let vnto him, or hys necessarie businesse for the tyme: But rather as all thyngs doe happen, euen so doth he apply himself vnto the same. Hee that is ordered and framed inwardely as right, the same passeth not vpon the wonderfull and preposterous maners of men. Euery man is so much hindred and distracted as hee draweth businesse vnto himselfe. If thou were rightly fashioned and purged substantially, all thyngs shoulde be profitable and commodious vnto thee. Therefore doe many thynges mylike thee, and doe oftentimes disquiet thee, bycause thou art not yet fully mortified vnto thy selfe, nor separated from all earthly and transitorye thyngs. Nothing doth so much stayne and entangle the soule of man, as the impure loue of the creatures. If thou shalt despise the comforts of the externall or outward things, it will come to passe that thou mayst the better beholde heavenly thynges, and oftentimes reioyce triumphantly within thy selfe.

Many
things doth
mylike thee
bycause
thou art
not fully
mortified.

Of

The Imitation of Christ.
Of Modestie and obedience.

The .ij. Chapter.

So God
be wyth
thee, care
not who
is against
thee.



Make no great accounte who is
on thy side or against thee: but
be occupied and carefull in this
point, how God maye be wyth
thee in all thy doings, and how
thou mayest haue a good and an byright con-
science: so shall it come to passe that **GOD**
will sufficiently defende thee. For no mans
frowardnesse shall bee able to doe him anye
hurt, whome he shall be willing to defend. If
thou shalt skill to hold thy peace, and to suffer
or beare patiently, vndoubtedly thou shalt be-
holde the ayde and succour of the Lorde. We
knoweth when it is time to deliuer thee, and
therefore oughtest thou wholly to commit thy
selfe vnto him. It belongeth to God to helpe,
and to deliuer man from all rebuke & shame.
It doth manye times much good to keepe vs
vnder the better, that our vices shoulde bee
knowne and reprovued of other men. Whylst
that a man doth humble himselfe for his faults,
hee doth soone pacifie other men, and satisfieth
them that are offended with him wyth little
adwe: **GOD** doth defende and deliuer the
humble

humble person : He humbleth himself to him that is humble , he bountifullye giueth manye thinges to the humble , and aduanceth him vnto glozie after his thysing downe : To the humble he openeth his secretes , and draweth and allureth the same sweetely vnto him. Though the humble person be spitefully vbled and flandered , or brought into an euill name, yet is he of quiet and pacient mind, because he stayeth himselfe vpon God, and not vpon the worlde. Thinke not that thou hast profited any thing at all , vnlesse thou take thy self for the verpest abiect of all other men.

Of the good and quiet person.

The .iiij. Chapter.



Archaise and procure peace vnto thy selfe first of all : so shalt thou be able at the length to set peace among other . A quiet person doth moze good than one well learned : But the vnquiet and contencious drawler doth drawe euery thing which is good into the euill part, and quickly beléueth euill . A good and quiet man interpereteth all to the best . Hee that is of quiet minde , the same hath no euill suspicion of any man : but
 A vertice
 man inter-
 pereteth all
 things, to
 the best.
 he

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he that is not content with his state or condition, but is tossed with diuers suspicions, the same partye is neyther quyet hymselfe, nor yet suffereth other to bee quiet by him. Many times he speaketh that which he ought not, and letteth passe that which were expedient to be done: He considereth what is another mans duetie, and yet his owne dutie he passeth not bypon. Wherefoze looke thou speciallve to thine owne dutie, and so shalt thou best looke vnto the duty of another man. Thou hast good skyll to excuse and beare with thyne owne downges, and yet thou admittest not the excuses of others. More reasonable it were that accusing thyne owne selfe, thou shouldest excuse another. If thou wilt be bozne with, doe thou likewise beare with another. And behold how farre off thou art yet from perfite loue and modestie, which can tell how to take displeasure and be angry with no body, but onely with himselfe. It is no great matter to deale with good and quiet persons, bicause that thing is naturally pleasant vnto all men, and euery body wyssheth for peace, and loneth them above the rest that are agreeable vnto him. But to bee able to liue quietly with the rigorous and frowarde, with those that withstande vs, or men of euill nature

Doe as
thou woldest
bee
done vnto.

nature & crooked condicions : thys is in dæde the point of a ioly & valiant fellowe, and one woꝛthy of high pꝛayse & commendation. And some there be that both liue at peace with theſelues, and alſo with other men. Some other that neyther enioy peace themſelues, noꝝ yet ſuffer other to enioy the ſame. Troubleſome ſurely are they to other, but yet to theſelues, they are alwaies moꝛe troubleſome. Some againe there be that doe kēpe ſtill themſelues in peace, & alſo endeuoꝛ to reduce other men to peace. Howbeit oure whole peace in thys wꝛetched life is rather to be placed in moꝛdeſt paciēce, than it is in not ſeeling of aduerſity. The moꝛe a man knoweth howe to ſuffer aduerſitie paciētly, the greater peace doth he enioy, and is likewise both conquerour of himſelfe, and Lord of the woꝛlde, and friende of Chꝛiſt, and heire of Heauen.

Of the ſinceritie of minde, and
plainneſſe of meaning.

The iij. Chapter.



An is rayſed aboue earthlye thinges with two winges : to wæte, with ſimplicite and ſinceritie. Simplicitie is in meaning oꝛ witte : Sinceritie is in

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in affection. The first applieth it selfe to God. This other taketh hold of him, & tasteth what he is. No good deede shall hinder thee, if thou wilt haue thy soule free from al inordinate affections. If thou wilt intend & seeke after nothing else than the wyll of God, & the profite of another, thou shalt enioy liberty of mynde. If thy Soule were right & synccere, the whole Worlde shoulde be a glasse to thy lyfe, and a booke of godly doctrine. For there is no creature so small and so vile, that doth not represent vnto vs the goodnesse of God. For we if thou haddest a good and pure soule, thou shouldest see all things without any impediment, and shouldest vnderstande them thoroughly. For the pure soule doth pierce both Heauen and Hell, and such as euery mans soule is, euen so doth it iudge of outwarde things. If there be gladnesse any where, the man of pure heart doth enioy the same. Againe, if there be calamitie and anguyshe any where, no bodye knoweth it better than hee that hath an euill conscience. Like as yron being cast into the fyre is rid from his rust, and is made glowing hote altogether, euen so the person turning himselfe wholly vnto God, doth put off his dulnesse and is chaunged into a new man. He that is but warme, flyeth from so small paines

paines and procureth outward comfort : but if the same haue begun once earnestly to maffter himfelfe, & like a man to treade the path of Godlyneffe, it happeneth that the thynges which befoze he felt heauye, he doth now reken but for flight and easie.

Of the confideration of a mans felfe.

The.v.Chapter



We ought not to much to credit our felues, for many times we lacke both naturall giftes and wit : we are endued with tender light of vnderftanding, and doe fone forgo the fame through negligence. Many times alfo we doe not marke and perceiue that we are in fuch blindneffe and ignorance. And againe, many times we offend : and beftdes, excufe the worfer finne, & fometimes, prouoked with defire we thinke it a good affection. We finde fault with other men for trifles : & we our felues doe let flip our owne faultes that be greater. Thofe things that other men doe vnto vs, we feele very fone, and make deepe account of them: But we doe not marke and confider what other men do cary
alway

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away at our handes. Undoubtedly, if a man doe well & rightly consider his owne doings, the same shall haue small cause to iudge o^r therwise than well of an other man. The inwarde man preferreth the care of himselfe befoze all cares: And he that doth diligently intende hymselfe, the same doth soone holde his tongue about another man. Thou shalt neuer become inwarde & Godly, vnlesse thou wilt say nothing of another, and beholde thy selfe with especiall regarde. If thou wilt giue thy selfe wholly to thy selfe and to God, the things that shall happen outwardlye, shall but lyttle moue thee. Where art thou become whylest thou art not present wyth thy selfe: or after thou hast delt with all things, what hast thou profited, thy selfe being yet neglected: That thou mayest attaine to perfecte peace and concozde, necessary it is that thou haue thy selfe onely befoze thyne eyes, neglecting al other things. So attainest thou perfect peace and concozd. Therfoze thou shalt both much profite and come forwarde, if thou giue ouer all worldely care: and againe, thou shalt much decay in godlynesse, if thou shalt set store by any worldely things. Let nothing bee in admiration, nothyng great, nothing welcome, nothyng accepted of thee, but that
which

A readie
way to god
lines if y
giue ouer
all world=
ly care.

which eyther is God altogether, or belong-
ing to God: and whatsoeuer comfort is of-
fered of the creatures, reckon all that but for
vaine and vnp̄ostable. The soule that is in
loue wpyth God, despiseth all thinges in the
respect of God. The euerlasting God onely,
without measure, filling all thinges, is the
comfort of the soule, and true ioy of heart.

Of the ioy of a good conscience.

The vi. Chapter.



The glozy of a good man consis-
teth in the testimony of a good
conscience. Haue alwayes a
good and vpright conscience, & thou
shalt enioye continuall

A good con-
science is
the testy-
mony of a
godly man.

gladnesse of heart. A good conscience is both
able to beare pacientlye a great manye of
things, & in the midst of his aduersitie to try-
umph also with ioy: but one hauing remorse
of sinne within him, is alwayes fearefull and
vquiet. Thou shalt take thy rest swete-
lye, if thy conscience doe not accuse thee. Re-
uer ioye but when thou hast done well. The
wicked neuer either enioye true gladnesse,
or haue the feele of prace of conscience by-
cause the Godlesse (as the Lorde sayeth) are

G. J.

boyde

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boyde of peace: But if they affirme that they
 doe lyue in peace, and yet saye that they are
 not to be inuaded wth aduersitie, and that
 no man dare to doe them hurt, beleue them
 not. For the w^rath of God shall be so great
 vpon them sodainely, that both their dwings
 shalbe brought to naught, and their thoughts
 perishe. It is no harde thing for him that lo-
 ueth, to boast on calamitie. For so to boast,
 is to boast vpon the care and prouidence of
 G D D. Soone ended is the glozy that is ey-
 ther gyuen or receyued of men: and heauy-
 nesse doth alwaye accompanie wo^rldly glo-
 rie. The glorie of the god standeth in theyr
 owne conscience, & not in the mouth of men.
 The ioy of the iust is both of God & in God,
 and their ioy is of the truth. He that desireth
 true and everlasting glozy, the same passeth
 not vpon tempo^rall glozy: and hee agayne
 that either seeketh tempo^ral glozy, or not des-
 piseth the same wth hys heart, that person
 vtterly loueth not the heauenly glozy. Great
 quyetnesse of mynde hath hee which passeth
 neyther for prayles, nor rebukes and flaun-
 ders. He sheweth hymselfe soone contented
 and quiet with his owne state and calling,
 whose conscience is clere. Neither art thou
 the more holy if thou be prayled, nor yet the
 naughtier

The ioye
 of the iust
 is of God,
 and in god.

naughtier if thou bee dysprayed. Thou art
as thou art: and canst not be called greater
then as thou art in the sight and iudgement
of God. If thou wilt consider what thou art
wythin thy Soule, thou wilt not passe what
men doe speake of thee outwardely. Man
seeth thy face and outward shape, God be-
holdeth thy minde: Man wayeth thy deedes,
God considereth thyne intents & meanings.
Guermore to doe well and to esteeme little of
himselfe, is the token of a modest mynde. To
admit the comfort of no worldly thing, is
singuler synceritie and cleannesse, and an ar-
gument of inwarde sayth and trust. He
that seeketh for no testimonie of himselfe fro
anye creature, there is no doubte, but the
same hath betaken hymselfe wholly vnto
G O D. For he is not to be allowed which
commendeth hymselfe, (sayth Paule) but he
whome God commendeth. To haue to doe
wyth God in our Soule, and to be tossed out-
wardly wyth no affection, is the state of the
inwarde man.

God is on-
ly the scar-
cher of
mannes
heart.

Of the louing of Iesus aboue
all thinges.

The .vij. Chapter.

G. ij.

Blessed

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Blessed is he that vnderstandeth what it is to loue Iesus, and to despise himselfe for Iesus sake. For louing, the person beloued must be forsaken: forasmuch as Iesus will be loued onely aboue al things. The loue of worldly thinges is deceptfull & vnsustainable: But Iesus is faithfull and durable. He that cleaueth fast to a worldely thing, the same shall perishe wyth the thyng subiect to decay and corruption: but he that embraceth Christ, the same abideth still for euer. Loue him, holde thee still to his friendship, which (when all men goe from thee) wyll not forsake thee, nor at the length suffer thee to perishe. Thou shalt sometime be pulled from men whether thou wilt or no, wherefore both liuing and dying, stick fast vnto Iesu, & commit thy selfe to his promise, which (when all men faile) is only able to helpe thee. Hee it is that is thy friende, being of that nature and propertie, that he can abide no other friende, but doth onely challenge thy soule vnto hymselfe, and sittes as King in the scate thereof. Now if thou haddest skill to cast away the societie and medling in all worldelye thynges, Iesus woulde willingly come and dwell with thee. Thou shalte in maner finde it all lost,
to what so

whatsoever thou hast bestowed vpon any body besides Iesus. Trust not or staye not vpon the wauering Kēde. For all men are grasse, & their whole glory doth vanishe like a flower.

Thou shalt soone be deceiued, if thou shalt only bende thyne eyes vpon the outward shew of men. For if thou shalt seeke thy comfort & gaine in other things, thou shalt oftentimes suffer detriment or losse. If thou shalt seeke for Iesus in all things, truly thou shalt finde Iesus: but if thou shalt seeke thy selfe, thou shalt finde thy selfe in deede: howbeit, to thine owne destruction. For euery man doth more hurt vnto himselfe, if hee seeke not after Iesus, than the whole worlde and all his enemies can doe besides.

If thou trust vpon y outward shewe of man, thou shalt soone be deceyued.

Of the familiar friendship of Iesus.

The .viij. Chapter.



Whest Iesus is present, all things are in good case, & nothing seemeth difficult or heard: but whē he is once absent, all things are vneasie. When Iesus doth not sprake in the soule of man, euery comfort is but of litle force: whē the same doth speake but one worde, more comfort is felt. So Ma-

C. lllj.

rye

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rye Magdalene did ryle from the place wher
 in she wept, allone as hir Sister Martha did
 bryng hir woꝝd that hir Payster was come, &
 that he did cal for hir. Happy is that howze in
 the which Iesus doth cal theē frō teares vnto
 the ioy of the spirit. How dry & harde art thou
 without Iesus? How foolish & vaine art thou
 if thou couet any thing besides Iesus? with
 greater losse, no doubt, thou doest so, then if
 thou shouldst lēse þ whole woꝝlde. For what
 good can the woꝝlde do theē without Iesus: To
 be without Iesus is bitter death: To be with
 the same Iesus, is pleasant life: If Iesus shal
 be with theē no enīmie shal be able to doe theē
 hurt. He that findeth Iesus findeth a good tre-
 sure, or rather the chiefest goodnes of al other.
 He that forgoeth the same Iesus, forgoeth tw
 to great a commoditie. And why haue I said
 to great? May he forgoeth moze thā if he lost
 the woꝝlde beside. He that liueth without Je-
 sus, is very poꝝe: he that agrēth well wyth
 Iesus, is very rich: to be conuersaunt with
 Iesus, is a point of great cunning: and to be
 skilful in keeping of him thy friend, is a point
 of great wisdom. Be modest and pacient,
 and so shall Iesus be present with theē: Be
 godly and quiet, and Iesus shall abide styll
 with theē. Thou shalt soone dyꝝue the same
Jesus

The ab-
 sence of Je-
 sus is bit-
 ter death.

In modest-
 tie Iesus
 is present.

Iesus away and shalt forgo his fauor, if thou
 shalt turne thy self to outward things. Now,
 if thou leese him by dyluing of him away, vnto
 whome then wilt thou flie for comfort? What
 friende wilt thou then seeke for? truely
 without a friende thou canst not long lyeue:
 and if Iesus shall not stand thy friende aboue
 all other, thou shalt bee soye without mea-
 sure, being once forsaken of him. Therefore
 thou doest foolishly if thou trust to any beside,
 or reioyce in any other. Better it is to haue
 the whole worlde against thee, than Iesus
 onely. Therefore of all those that are deare
 vnto thee, let Iesus be the dearest: Let other
 be loued for Iesus sake, and let Iesus be lo-
 ued for his owne sake. Iesus Christ alone is
 singularlye to bee beloued, who among thy
 friendes is onely sounde good and saythfull.
 For his sake and in hym, both thy friendes
 and enemies ought to be deare vnto thee, and
 the same Iesus must be prayed vnto for them
 all, that all may know and loue him. Reuer-
 conet to be prayed and loued singularly: for
 this belongeth to God, who hath no peere or
 equall, neyther wish thou that any mannes
 minde should be addicted wholly vnto thee, nor
 be thou occupped in the loue of any man: but
 let Iesus be both in thee and in all good men,
 C. liij. haue

If Iesus
 bee wyth
 thee care
 not for the
 whole
 worlde.

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haue a cleane and fræ soule, and such as is without all let of worldely things. For thou must be cleane and bring a sincere soule vnto Iesus if thou wilt giue thy selfe to contemplacion; and beholde howe swæte or pleasant the Lorde is: And surely thou shalt neuer get vp to that gryce, vnlesse thou be pꝛeuented & drawen with his fauor, that all things being abolished & wholly reiected of thee, thou mayst be coupled vnto him alone. For if Gods fauor be the meane betwene man and Iesus, it hapneth that man is able to doe every thing.

If a man
be without
the fauour
of Christ,
he is both
poore and
weake.

If the same fauor haue once departed from a man, he by and by is poore and weake, and as it were one left onely for torments and whipping: which thinges whilset they chaunce, thou oughtest not therfore to be discouraged, or yet to dispaire, but to haue a good hope of the wyll of God, and pacientlye to beare all thy mysaduentures vnto the prayse of Iesus Christ. For Sommer followeth after Wynter, and the day retourneth againe after the nyght, and great clærenesse commeth after tempest.

Of the lacking or being without comfort.

The. ix. Chapter.



It is no hard matter to despyse
 worldely comforte, so long as
 Gods comfort is present wyth
 thee: But to be able to lacke
 both worldelye and Heauenlye
 comfort, and willingly to suffer the banishe-
 ment of the soule for the glozy of God, and to
 be affectionate towarde hymselfe in nothing,
 noz yet to behold his owne merite oz reward:
 this surely is a great matter, oz rather the
 greatest of all other. What great thing is it,
 if whilst the fauor of God is with thee, thou be
 cherefull and godly: Who would not wishe
 for that howze as wel as thy selfe: Pleasant-
 ly doth he ryde, whome Gods grace doth ca-
 rie: & what wonder is it if he feele no burthen
 that is caried of the Almightye, and conducted
 of the highest Guide: Gladly doe we cleaue
 fast vnto the comfort of some creature, and
 hardlye doth man renounce and forsake him-
 selfe: yea, much and long time must he fight
 oz stryue, befoze hee learne fully to mayster
 hymselfe, & to draw all his powers vnto God.
 So long as hee stayeth vpon hys owne selfe,
 he quickly falleth vnto worldely comfortes;
 but the true louer of Christ, and the studious
 folower of vertues doth not turne vnto those
 comfortes, noz seeketh after such delites of the
 senses,

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senses, but rather for vehement exercises, & for streight labors for Christs his sake. Therfore if at any time spirituall comfort be graunted thee of God, receyue thou the same with thankesgiuing, and wete thou that it is gods gift, and not thy deseruing, and be not proud thereat. Reioyce not to much at thy gift, nor ware proude vainely, but be rather so much the more modest, and in all thy deedes also the more warie and fearefull. For the time of that comfort shall passe awaye, and temptation shall come after. Therfore when comfort is taken from thee, dispaire not forthwith but looke after helpe at Gods hand wpth modesty and patience. For God is able to endue thee againe with a more ample gift, & greater comfort: Neyther is this thyng straunge or vnwonted vnto them that haue once made tryall of the waye of God. For men of greatest vertue, and the auncient Prophets haue assayed and felt such alteration in themselves. Therefore a certayne man endued wpth the Spirit of God, sayde thus. Whilest I was in so great felicity, I thought I should neuer haue beene disgraced againe.

And when the same felicitie was once taken awaye from him, hee addeth what then happened vnto him, in these wordes: Afterwarde

If thou
want the
spirite of
God dyl-
paye not
but looke
for helpe
at Gods
hands.

terwarde when thou diddest hyde thy face from me, I was troubled.

And yett all thys while he dispayreth not, but prayeth vnto God so much the more earnestly, and sayth thus : I haue made mine inuocation vnto thee, O Lorde, I haue made supplication vnto the Lorde.

At the last he hath the rewarde of his supplication, and testifieth that he was hearde, saying : The Lord hath hearde me, and taken pittie vpon me. But wherin I pray you : Thou (sayth he) hast turned my sorow into mirth, & ridding me from my sackcloth, hast clad me with ioy. Nowe, if these things haue happened to men of so great holynesse, we abjectes & needye persons must not dispaire, although sometime we be in colde, and sometime wee bee in colde, and sometime in heate : sozasmuch as the sprite commeth and goeth according to his will and pleasure. And soz that cause Iob sayth : Thou settest so much store by him, that thou hast a regarde ouer him, and daily doest care for him, and makest prooue or tryall of him euery houre.

Therefore in what thyng else ought I to haue hope, or wher vnto else ought I to trust but onely to that mightie mercie of God, and beauenlye grace : For though I haue good
men

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men and godly bzethzen, and faithfull friends,
oz bookes of holy scripture, and trinu commu-
nicatiō, oz swēete songs and balades with me,
yet doe al these things litle profite: They like
me but a litle, if (being for saken of Gods spi-
rit) I be left vnto mine owne nēde oz naked-
nesse. At that time there is no better reīmedy
than pacience and deniall of thy 'selfe accor-
ding to the will of God. Surely I neuer chaū-
ced to talke with anye Godly person, from
whome the spirite of God hath not sometime
bēene withdrauen, oz which hath not felte a
decrease of his heate. Neither hath there e-
uer bēene any holy man so dēepely rauished &
lightned in soule, but that the same hath some
time at the least bēene tempted, eyther fyrst
oz last. For he is not worthy the high contem-
placion of God, who for Gods cause hath not
bēene exercised wpyth some miserye. For the
temptacion going besoze, is wont to be a to-
ken of the comfort that commeth after. For
heauenlye comfort is promised vnto them
which haue bēene tryed wpyth temptacyons.
He that shall ouercome, saith Christ, to hym
will I graunt to feede vppon the Tree of lyfe.
And Gods comforte is graunted that man
may bē more strong to beare out aduersitie.
And temptacion doth follow, least he shoulde
be

be to proude of that good commoditie. The
 Denill slepeth not; neyther is the fleshe yet
 mortified. And therefore neuer cease to pre-
 pare thy selfe to battell. For the vnquiet eni-
 mies are both vpon thy right hand & thy left.

Of thankfulness for the benefits of God.

The .x. Chapter.



Why dost thou seeke after quiet-
 nesse, seeing thou art bozne vn-
 to labour? Weelde thy selfe ra-
 ther vnto pacience than to com-
 fort: and to beare the Crosse,
 than to ioye and gladnesse. For what worl-
 dy man woulde not willingly liue alwayes in
 spirituall comfort, if he might euermore haue
 and obtaine the same? Which comfort excel-
 leth all the daynties of the worlde and plea-
 sures of the fleshe. For all worldelye delites
 are eyther dishonest or vaine: but the spiritu-
 all are onely pleasant, onely honest, onely
 causer of vertues, and inspired of God into
 pure mindes. But these comfortes of GOD
 are such, that no man can enioye them at his
 owne pleasure, bicause temptation doth no
 long time cease. The false liberty of the soule,
 and the ouermuch confidence of a mans owne
 selfe,

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Itselfe, doth much withstand the heavenly help
or comfort : & God doth well : which bestow-
eth the benefite of his comfort vpon man : but
man doth naught, that doth not acknowledg
the same wholly to come from God with tha-
nkegiuing. Herevpo it happeneth that Gods
gifts can not flowe vnto vs , bicause wee are
vnthankfull to the giuer, and doe not poure
backe al things into the fountaine and spring
again. He that is thankfull, doth procure a
new benefite : and that is withdwalne from
the haughty vnthankfull, which maye be be-
stowed vpon the modest thankfull. I woulde
not haue comfort, that shoulde take from me
the prick of awe, neither is that the cause of
vnderstanding of things, which boyseth mee
vp into pryde. For whatsoeuer is high , the
same is not also holy : neither is euery desire
pure : neither is the same healthfull, what soe-
uer is sweet : Neither is the same also accep-
table vnto God, whatsoeuer is deere vnto me.
I receyue those benefites willinglye, by the
which I maye be made the more modest and
fearefull , and more ready to gyue ouer and
forsake my self. He that is taught and chastis-
sed wyth benefites receyued at Gods hande,
and the same afterwards be taken from him
again, the same dareth not to attribute any
god,

goodnesse vnto himselfe, but rather confesseth
himselfe needy and naked. Giue vnto **G D D**
that which is Gods, and ascribe to thy selfe
that which is thine owne: that is to say, giue
thanks vnto God for his benefites, and at-
tribute sinne vnto thy selfe: and for sinne
thinke that punishmentes are due vnto thee.
Recken thy selfe alwaies in the lowest place,
and so shal the highest be ginen thee. For there
can be no highest, without respect of the low-
est. Those account themselues for the least,
whome God reckoneth for chiefest, because of
their godlinesse: and the more full of glozy
they be, so much the more humblye they be-
haue themselves, being full of truth, and hea-
uenlye glozy, not desirous of vaine glozy. It
is not possible any way that they should ware
prowde, which stande stayde vpon God: and
they which ascribe vnto **G D D** whatsoeuer
goodnesse they haue attained, the same do not
couet after mutuall glozy, but desire that
which is of God onely, & couet that God both
in himselfe and in all other holy men may be
prayed aboue all things, and enermore dy-
rect their doings to that ende. Wherefore,
shewe thy selfe thankfull in small things, and
thou shalt bee woorthie to attaine to greater
things. Let euen the least and most base gifts
be

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be reckened of thee for verie great and notable. For if the worthinesse of the giuer be considered, no gift or quality ought to seeme small or course. For it is no small gift that is giuen of the high and mightie God, insomuch that if he doe giue euen punishments and stripes, the same ought to be welcome vnto vs, because it maketh for our saluation whatsoeuer he suffereth to happen vnto vs. He that desireth to keepe still the grace and fauor of God, let the same shewe him selfe thankfull for the benefites giuen him, and patient when the same be taken from him, and let him praye that they may come againe, and let him be chary, and modest, that he forgoe them not.

Of the small number of the louers of Christ his Crosse.

The .xi. Chapter.



Jesus hath now many louers of his heauenly kingdom: howbeit, he hath few bearers of his Crosse: he hath many desirous of comfort, but fewe of calamitie: He findeth a great sort partakers of his table, but fewe of his continencie. All men will reioyce with Christ, but fewe will suffer affliction

affliction with him. Manye followe Iesus euen to the breaking of bread, but fewe followe him to drinke of the Cup of his passion. Manye men worship his miracles, but fewe doe followe the Ignominy of his Crosse. Many doe loue Iesus so long as aduersitie doth not happen vnto them: Many doe prayse the same Iesus and giue him thanks, so long as they receyue some comfort at his handes. If the same Iesus doe hide himselfe from them, and forsake them a litle while, they fall either into complaynts and moanings, or else into ouermuch dispayre of soule. But they which loue Iesus for Iesus owne sake, and not for any comfort that they receyue of him, the same doe magnifie and prayse him, as wel in the calamities and anguishes of the mind, as in their greatest comforts, readie to doe no lesse although he should denie and barre them of all comfort for euermore. So much is the meere loue of Iesus able to do, being blended with no priuate commoditie, or loue of hymselfe. Therefore, they are to be called hirelings, which doe euermore seeke after comforts. Plaine it is that they are rather louers of themselues than of Christ, which doe alwayes ponder theyr owne commodities and gaine. How many are there of a great num-

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ber that will serue God frely and without al respectes, or which are so spirituall, that they are left bare and destitute of all worldely thyngs: I say againe: who can fynde one poore in spirite & naked of all worldly thyngs: and that precious fellow that must be fetched from the furthestmost coastes of the worlde: Though a man doe bestowe all hys goodes, he hath yet done nothing: and though he chastise himselfe with a streight and earnest repentaunce of hys sinnes, yet is it but a small matter: and though he vnderstand all knowledge, he is yet a great way off: and though he be indued with singular vertue, and most earnest zeale of religion, he hath as yet a gret deale lacking: namely this one which is marueylous necessary for him. But what is that I praye you: Namely, that forsaking al other things, he forsake himselfe to, and departyng wholly out of himselfe, doe keepe still no pryuate or selfe loue. When he hath done all things that he knoweth shoulde be done, let him thinke that he hath done nothing, and let him not esteeme it much that he may be counted great, but let him pronounce himselfe an vnprofitable seruaunt in dede, like as the truth saith: When you haue done all thinges which are commaunded you: yet say you thus,

we are vnprofitable seruaunts. Then shall he at the length be needie and naked in soule, & shall be able to say with that Prophet, Solitarie and needie am I. And yet is no man richer then hee, no man moze free, no man moze mightie, which both knoweth how to forsake himselfe and all other thinges, and to debase himselfe to the verie basest things.

Of bearing of Christ his Crosse.

The .xij. Chapter.



His seemeth a harde saying to manye men: Denie thy selfe, take vp thy Crosse and followe Iesus. But much moze harde is that saying in the latter daye: Get you hence ye cursted, into fire euerlasting. For they which now willingly heare and follow the saying of the Crosse, the same then shall not feare that heauy sentence of euerlasting damnation. And this signe of the Crosse shall be in heauen, when the Lord shall come to iudge the worlde. Then all the seruants of the Crosse which haue led a life agreeable vnto Christ that was nailed vpon the crosse shall come vnto Christ the iudge, with great fayth and trust. Why then doubttest thou to take vp
 thy

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thy Crosse, by the which thou goest to a kingdome : Saluacion is in the Crosse : In the Crosse is life : In the Crosse is ayde against thyne enymies : there is infusion of supernaturall pleasure in the crosse: there is strength of mynde in the Crosse : there is lope of spirite in the Crosse : in the Crosse there is exceeding vertue : in the Crosse there is perfection of Godli nesse. To be short, without the Crosse, there is neyther health of soule, noz yet hope of everlasting life. Therefore take vp thy Crosse and follow Iesus, and thou shalt go into life euerlasting. He went forth beareing his Crosse, and died vpon a crosse for thy sake, that thou mightest beare a Crosse also, and couet to die vpon the Crosse. For if thou shalt die together with him, thou shalt also liue together with him : and if thou shalt be a companion of his passion, thou shalt also be a companion of his glozy. For that thou maiest vnderstande thus much, al things doe consist in the Crosse, & in dying, neither is there any other waye vnto life and true peace of soule, than the way of the Crosse, and of dailly mortifying thy selfe. Whither soeuer thou tourne thy selfe, on which side soeuer thou cast thine eyes thou shalt find no way any where aboue or beneath, neyther more high or more safe, then
then

then is the way of the Crosse. Although thou order and fashion al things according to thine owne wyll and iudgement, yet shall it not bee possible but that thou must euermore suffer somethyng epyther willinglye or against thy will, and alwayes incurre the Crosse. For epyther thou shalt seele paine of bodye, or bee tormented wyth grieve of minde. Sometime thou shalt be forsaken of GOD : sometyme thou shalt be exercised of an other man : and (which is moze greuous) thou shalt be tedious and ykesome vnto thine owne selfe many times : and that so farre, that thou mayest be deliuered by no remedie or comfort, but that thou must patientlye beare the same so long as it is Gods will and pleasure that it shall so be. For God will haue thee learne to suffer miserie without comfort, and to submit thy selfe wholly vnto him, that thou mayest become the moze modest in calamitie. No man feeleth the passiō of Christ so much in his hart, as he vnto whome it chaunceth to suffer the like thinges. Therefore the Crosse is alwayes ready, & tarseth for thee euery where, neyther canst thou escape it whether soeuer thou runne. For whether soeuer thou go, thou carpest thy selfe with thee, and shalt alwayes finde thy selfe. Turne thy selfe bpward, turne

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thy selfe downeward, turne thy self outward,
turne thy selfe inwarde, thou shalt finde the
Crosse any maner of way: and necessary it is
that at all times thou keepe pacience, if thou
wilt enioy peace of minde, and obtaine a per-
petuall Crowne. If thou wilt wyllinglye
beate the Crosse, the same shall likewise
beare and stay thee, and shal byng thee to the
desired ende: namely, whereas there shall be
an ende of suffering, which ende vndoubtedly
shall not be in this life. If thou shalt beare it
against thy wyll, thou shalt cause a burthen
vnto thy selfe, and shalt agræue and waye
down thy selfe the moze, and yet must needes
beare it for all that. If thou shalt cast awaye
one Crosse, thou shalt surely incurre another
and the same perhaps moze heauy. Dost thou
hope that thou shalt escape that, which no
man liuing could euer decline or turne from:
Which of the Godly men in the woꝛlde hath
there euer bene without his Crosse and mise-
rie? Our Lorde Iesus Christ was not an
houre boyde of sorowe and torment, so long
as he lyued in this woꝛlde. For it behoued
Christ to suffer, and to rise againe fro death,
and so to enter his gloꝛy: and wilt thou seeke
any other way besides this high waye of the
Crosse: The whole life of Christ was a crosse
and

and torment : and wilt thou seeke rest and ioy
vnto thy selfe? Thou wandrest out of the way,
thou wandrest out of the way, I say, if thou
seeke any other meane then the pacient suffering
of calamities : bicause thys mortall lyfe
of ours is altogether full of miseries, and hedged
round about with Crosse: and the more
euery man hath profited in godlinesse, into so
much the more græuous Crosse doth he fall,
namely when the paine of calamity doth encrease
the more through loue. And yet doth
not this man of whome I talke, being pressed
with so manifolde calamities, lacke the ease
of comfort, forasmuch as he also feelth that
hee taketh plentifull commoditie and fruit by
thys Crosse. For whilſt that he submitteth
himselfe of hys owne accorde vnto the crosse,
it happeneth that the whole burthen of calamitie
is tourned into the trust of Gods comfort :
and the more the flesh is ouertourned
with calamitie, so much the more is the spirit
strengthened wyth the comfort of the soule.
And so much is he sometime confirmed in the
feele of calamitie and aduersitie (so great is
the loue of the similitude of Christ his affliction,
) that he withereth not to be voide of sorrow
and misery, bicause he beleueth that he shall
be so much the more accepted of God, the mo

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and the moze grieuous things that he can patiently beare for his sake. Neyther doth that thing chaunce by mans vertue and power, but through the benefit of Christ, which can doe so much, and bringeth so much to passe in our fraile flesh, that the thing which man naturallie doth allwayes abhorre and flye, the same yet he attempteth and loueth through the feruentcy of the spirite. It is not in mans reach to beare the Crosse, to loue the Crosse, to tame and subdue the body, to flye from honours, willingly to take reproches and despites, to despise himselfe, and to wishe to be despised, patiently to suffer al aduersities and losses, and to desire no manner of prosperitie in this worlde. None of all these things canst thou doe of thy selfe, if thou shalt depende vpon thy selfe: but if thou shalt put thy trust in the Lord, strength shall be giuen thee from Heauen: and the worlde, and the flesh shall be subdued vnto thy rule and dominion. Nay, thou shalt not feare the enimitie of the Deuill neyther, if thou be armed with sayth, and marked with the Crosse of Iesus. Wherefore, apply thy selfe (like as it becommeth the faithfull and good seruaunt of Christ) to beare the Crosse of the Lord manfully, nayled vpon the Crosse for thy sake, through very pure
loue.

lous. Be thou readie to beare many aduersities, and diuers incommodities in this wretched lyfe: for so shal it frame with thee whersoeuer thou shalt liue: and this condicion must be suffered of thee altogether whersoeuer thou shalt lye hidde, neyther is there any way in any place to escape the misery of calamities, and sorowes, but that the same must be patiently suffered. Drinke thou of the Lordes Cup gladly, if thou couet to be his frende and partner. And as touching the comforts, commit thou them to God: let him vse them according to his good will and pleasure. Be thou wholly gyuen to beare calamities, and reckon the same for very great comforts.

Neyther are the calamities of this lyfe counternayling the glorie to come that we shall at the length enjoy, although thou were able alone, and no body but thy selfe to suffer them al. After that thou art come so farre forward that it is a swete and pleasant thing vnto thee to beare aduersity for Christ his sake, then thinke that thou art in good case, which hast already founde the kingdome of heauen vpon the earth, againe, so long as thou shalt be grieved to beare them, and shalt flye from them, so long shalt thou be in euill case, & the auoyding or flying from calamitie shall
bere

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where the euerie where. But if thou shalt apply thy selfe to thy duetye, that is to saye, to suffer and mortifie olde Adam, thou shalt shortlye be eased, and shalt finde peace. Although thou be wrapt wyth Paule, euen into the thirde heauen, yet hast thou no warrantize or assurance that thou shalt suffer no maner of aduersitie. I (saith Iesus) will shew vnto him howe much he must suffer for my names sake. Therefore it is necessary that thou doe suffer, if it lyke thee to loue Iesus, and to serue him euermore. And would to God thou were worthy to suffer some thing for the name of Iesus. How much glory shal arise both vnto thy selfe therby, and ioi to all the saints, and profite vnto men. For pacience doe all men commend, though few be willing to suffer. Surely there is great cause why thou shouldest be willing to suffer a litle for Christ his sake, seeing thou sufferest much more paineful things to compass the worlde. And wote thou well this, that thou must liue by dying vnto thy self, and the more that enery man doth dye vnto himselfe, so much the more doth the same waie alue vnto God. No man is apt or fit to comprehend heauenly things, but he which shall submit himselfe to heare aduersitie for Christ his sake. Finally, nothing is either more acceptable

ceptable vnto God, or more healthfull vnto thy selfe in this life thā willingly to suffer for Christ: in so much that if thou be put to thy choyse, thou oughtest to desire rather to suffer aduersitie for Christ, thā to be refreshed with many comforts. For so shalt thou be the liker both vnto Christ & to al his holy seruants. Neither is our merite and the comming forwarde in our duetie consisting in plentye of pleasures and comforts, but rather impacyent bearing of græuous euilles and calamities. Now, if there had bene any better way, or more healthfull vnto man than to suffer aduersities, no doubt Christ woulde haue shewed the same vnto vs by his wordes and deedes. But now he exhorteth his disciples & followers, and all those that are desirous to doe as he did, manifestly to beare the Crosse, and that in this wise: If any man will followe me, let him renounce himselfe, and take vp his Crosse and follow me. Therfore al things beyng reade ouer and tryed, let this

bee the conclusion of our talke:

We must enter into the kingdome of God by manye calamities,

ties,

The

The thirde Booke:

Of the inwarde communication of Christ
with the faithfull soule.

The first Chapter.



Wil heare what the Lord
GOD speaketh within mee.
Blessed be the soule, which
heareth the Lorde speakyng
wthyn hym, and receyueth
the worde of comfort at hys
mouth. Blessed are the eares that receiue the
sounde of that noyse that God maketh vnto
them, and take no heede at all vnto the noises
of this world. Blessed altogether are the eares
which harcken not vnto the voyce that soun-
deth outwardely, but heareth the truth and
speakeing inwardly. Blessed are the eyes
which being shut vnto outward thinges, are
wholly bent vpon inward thinges. Blessed are
they that pierce vnto inward thinges, and doe
more and more endeuoꝝ to prepare theselues
by daily exercises to receiue heauenly secrets.
Blessed are they that take it ioyefully to giue
themselues vnto god, and to ridde themseiu-
es from all worldely let. Marke these thinges, O
my soule, and shutte swyth desires, that thou
mayest

mayest able to heare what thing the LORD
 God doth speake in thee. Thy friende speak-
 eth these things : I am thy health and saluati-
 on, I am thy peace, I am thy lyfe : cleaue first
 vnto me, and thou shalt finde peace. Let passe
 all worldly things, and seeke for everlastyng
 things. For what are all tempoꝝall thinges,
 but onely very decestes : What doe all the
 Creatures profite thee, if thou be forsaken of
 the Creator : Wherefoze, reiecting al thinges,
 make thy selfe accepted and saythfull to thy
 Creator, that thou mayest be able to attayne
 vnto true blessednesse.

That the truth doth speake within vs with-
 out noyse of wordes.

The ij. Chapter.



Speake Lorde : for thy seruant
 doth hearken, I am thy ser-
 uant, giue me vnderstanding,
 that I maye learne thy lawes
 and decrees. Incline my soule
 to the wordes of thy mouth, bicause thy talke
 floweth lyke vnto beue. The Israelites sayd
 to Moyses in olde tyme : Speake thou vnto
 vs, and wee will heare thee : but let not the
 Lorde speake least we shoulde die. Howbett, I
 pray

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pray not so, O Lord, I pray not so : but rather with the Prophet Samuell, doe humbly and earnestly beseeche thee thus : speake ont Lord : for thy seruauit doth hearken. And let not Moyses or any other of the Prophets speake vnto mee : but doe thou rather speake vnto me, O God, being the inspirer and gyuer of life vnto al the Prophets, who art able alone without them to instruct me. Whereas they on the other side without thee can preuayle nothing. In deede they may vtter and sounde forth the wordes : but the spirite they doe not giue. They speake in deede very trimlye : but if thou holde thy peace, they doe not kindle and stirre vp the soule. They teache the letters, but thou openest the meaning.

They speake forth the secretes : but thou vnlockest the vnderstanding of the thinges signified. They vtter the commandements : but thou helpest to performe the same. They shewe the waye : but thou givest strength to walke ouer the same : they handle the matter outwardlye : but thou instructest and givest lyght vnto the minds. They water outwardly, but thou givest the fruitfulnessse. They cry out in wordes : but thou givest vnderstanding to the hearer. Wherefore let not Moyses speak vnto me, but thou, O Lord my God, being
the

the enerlasting truth, least I die and be made
 vnfruitefull: or least if I shall be admonished
 outwardly onely, and not also kindled or in-
 flamed within, thy worde being hearde, & not
 practised, knowne, & not loued, beleued, and
 not kept, make but vnto my punishment.
 Therfore do thou speake, O Lord, for thy ser-
 uant doth giue eare. For thou hast the words
 of enerlasting life. Speake vnto me (I saye)
 that thing, which may bring both comfort vnto
 my soule, and amendement vnto my whole
 life, and also may cause glory and immortall
 honour vnto thee.

That the wordes of God are to be heard hum-
 bly: and that the same notwithstanding be
 not pondred and weyed of
 most men.

The thirde Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne, heare my words, being
 wordes most swete and plea-
 sant, and such as doe excell all
 the wysedome of the Philoso-
 phers and wise of this worlde.
 My words are spirite and life, and not to bee
 wayed with mans wist and policie, nor yet to
 be

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be drawn vnto vaine pleasure, but to be hard
with silence, and to be receiued with all ino-
desitie and godlynesse.

SERVANT. Blessed is he whome thou in-
structest and traynest vp in knowledge, O
Lorde, and doest teache thy laue, that thou
mayest helpe him in time of trouble, that hee
perish not.

LORDE. I both haue taught the Prophets
long since in olde time, and euen yet also now
doe not cease to speake vnto all men. Howe-
beit many are deafe and hard hearted at my
voyce. Most men doe more willingly heare
the worlde, than God, and doe sooner obey the
appetite and desire of their owne fleshe, than
the will of God. The worlde promyseth but
tempozall and small thyngs, and yet is it ser-
ued with great greedinesse. I doe promise ex-
ceeding great, and euerlasting thyngs: & yet
are the hearts of men heauy and dull. What
is he that serpeth and obeiseth me in al thyngs
wyth so great care, as the worlde and the
LORD OF the worlde are serued? Wee
ashtamed of it: and if thou wouldest knowe
why, hearken and giue eare vnto me: Many
men doe run a great iourney for a little wages
or hier: and there be scarcely a fewe that will
once step forward a fote to get euerlasting life.

A vile

Satan
Prince of
the worlde.

A vile rewarde is painefully sought for: men doe shamefullye go to lawe together, sometime for a small peece of money: and men doubt not both day and night to be tryed for a vaine tryfle, and small promise: but it yeketh them to traueyle (euen the least thing in the worlde) for a good thing vncchaungeable, for a rewarde vnestimable, for honoꝝ exceeding, and for gloꝝ immortall. Therefore be thou ashamed, thou slow & complayning seruant, because they are moze ready and quicke vnto destruction, than thou art vnto lyfe: and doe moze reioyce in vanitie, than thou in truth. And as for them, they are disappoined of their hope sometime: but my promise deceiueth no man, noꝝ sendeth any man away vnspedde of his erraunt, putting his trust in mee. That which I promise and prouounce in wordes, the same doe I perfoꝝme and fulfill in dede, in case a man doe perseuere stil vnto the ende in the loue of me. I am the rewarde of all good thinges, I am also an earnest searcher and tryer of all the godly. Wryte my wordes in thy heart, and occupie thy selfe diligently about the same. For they shall bee verye necessary in the time of thy trouble. The things that thou vnderstandest not when thou recedest them, the same shalt thou knowe in the

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time of thy curyng and healyng. And after two sortes am I went to cure and heale my elect: that is, wyth temptacyon and wyth comfozte: and the same I dailye scole two wayes. Fyrst in synding faulte wyth theyr synnes: then wyth exhorting and stirring them by vnto the increase of vertues. He that hath my words and despiseth the same, he hath that of which he shall be cōdemned in the last day.

¶ A prayer by which heauenly doctrine and religion is called for.

The .iiij. Chapter.

SERVANT.



My God, which art my whole goodnesse: who am I, that I dare bee so bolde as to speake vnto thee? I am thy most poore slave, and vile worme, & much more poore & more vile, than I eyther know my selfe, or dare tell vnto thee. And yet O Lorde, be thou mindesfull euen of this same thing, y I am nothing, that I haue nothing, & that I am nothing worth. Thou only art good thou iust, thou holy, thou art able to doe all thyngs, thou persournest all thyngs, thou fillest al thyngs, leauing the sinful only voyd & emptye.

A true description
of man.

emptie. Remember thy mercy, O Lord, and God hath
 fill my soule wth thy fauor, which wilt not made enery
 haue thy wo^rkes to be good fo^r nothing. Fo^r thing to
 holwe maye I continue in thys w^retched life, some vs^e
 vnlesse thy mercy & fauor do strengthen me: o^r ende.

Turne not thy face away from me: Deferre
 not thy curing of me from day to day: With-
 draw not thy cōso^rt from me, least my soule
 doe sēme in thy sight like vnto the earth that
 is boyde of moy^sturē. Lorde teach me to doe
 thy will: teach mee to walke wo^rthilye and
 humblye befo^re thee. Fo^r thou art my wyse-
 dome, and doest both know, and hast knowne
 me perfectly, aswell befo^re that I was bo^rne
 into the wo^rlde, as also befo^re the wo^rlde it
 selfe was made.

That truth and modestie in the sight of God
 is to be exercised.

The.v.Chapter

LORDE.



Onne, p^ractise thou truth in
 my sight, and alwaies sēke me
 in singlenesse of heart. He that
 exerciseth truth in my sight, the
 same shal be defended from the
 inuasions of euill, and him shal truth deliuer
 from

A.ij.

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from deceiuers and slaunders of the wycked. Now, if the truth shall deliuer thee, thou shalt be free in deede, and shalt not passe vpon the vayne wordes of men.

SERVANT. It is as thou sayest, Lord; and let me be so delt withall I pray thee, to wete: that thy truth may teach me, may keepe me, and maye bring me vnto an happie ende. Let the same deliuer me from all wicked lust, and from inordinate loue: So shall it be brought to passe, that I maye vse great libertie and freedome of soule towarde thee.

TRUTH. And I will teach thee what is right, & what is acceptable vnto me. Call thy sinnes to remembraunce with great sorrow and heauinesse of hart, and doe thou chalenge any thing vnto thy selfe for thy good deedes. For in verie deede thou art sinfull, and endangered and intozapped in many diseases of the minde, which goest euer moze of thyne owne nature vnto nothing, and sone fallest, art sone overcome, art sone troubled, and thy owne downe headlong. Finally, thou hast nothing wherin thou mayst gloze and boast, but rather many things for which thou oughtest to set litle by thy selfe. For thou art much moze weake than that thou art able to perceyue the same. Wherefore see that none of all thy

thy woꝝkes ſeeme great vnto thee. See thou think nothing of thy loſtineſſe, nothing precious & wonderfull, nothing to be reuerenced, nothing high, nothing prayſe woꝝthy, and to be deſired in deede, ſauing that which is euerlaſting. Let the euerlaſting truth pleaſe thee above all thinges, and let thy exceeding humbleſſe diſpleaſe thee. Feare nothing ſo much, diſpraiſe and ſie from nothyng ſo much, as thy vices and ſinnes, which ought moꝝe to myſlike thee, then the loſſe of anye manner thing beſides. Some doe not behaue themſelues towardeſ me purely and ſincerely, but rather (being led with a certayne curioſity and arrogancie) doe ſtudiouſly ſearch out my ſecrets and high myſteries, neglecting themſelues, and theiꝝ owne ſaluation. Theſe ſolowꝝ doe many times fal into græuous temptacions, and ſinnes, foꝝ theiꝝ owne curioſitie and pryde, becauſe I am againſt them. But being thinerous, doe thou ſtande in awe of the ſentence and wꝛath of almighty G D D, and ſearch not out the woꝝkes of the almighty, but ſearch thorowly thine owne faults, either how much euill thou haſt done, oꝝ elſe howe much good thou haſt neglected. Some doe beare about theiꝝ whole religion and Godlineſſe in bookeſ onely, ſome in pictureſ; ſome in oute-
A.ij. wards

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warde signes and figures : Other carpe mee in their mouth, but not so in theyr heart. Contrariwise, there are, which being of perfite vnderstanding in minde, and pure in hart, doe euermore breath and couet after euerlasting things, doe heare of earthly things against their willes, do that which nature necessarily requirerh with grieve & sorrow : and these in dede doe feele what the spirite of truth doth speake within them, as they which doe teach them to loue heavenly thinges, despising the earthlye, and both daye and night doe couet heauen, the worlde being contemned.

The praise of God, and thankesgiuing for benefites : and likewise of the force of the loue of God.

The .vi. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Praise thee, O heavenly Father, the Father of our Lorde Iesus Christ, which hast vouchsafed to remember mee needie Soule. O father of mercy, and God of al comfort, I giue thee thanks, which refreshest me, being vnworthy of al comfort, sometime with thy comfort. I praise & magnifie thee euermore, and also thy onely begot,

ten

ten Sonne, and thy holy ghost the comforter,
worlde without ende. Oh my Lorde God, O
the holy loue of me, when thou shalt come in
to my soule, I will reioyce with my whole
heart. Thou art my glozy, and the reioyce of
my heart: Thou art my hope and refuge in
the time of my calamitie and trouble. But be-
cause I am yet of weake loue and vnperfite
bertue, I reckon it necessary to be confirmed
of thee, and to be comforted at thy handes.
Wherefore, visite me oftentimes, & instruct
me with holy discipline. Deliuer mee from
wicked affections of the Soule, and heale my
minde from all the vnruely desires and vices:
that being healed inwardly, and well purged,
I maye be made fit to loue, strong to suffer,
constant to perseuere. Loue is a great mat-
ter: no doubt, a great good thing: which (one-
ly) doth make light each thing that is heauy,
and beareth equally whatsoeuer is vnequall.
For it beareth a burthē without any burthen,
and doth turne all bitter thinges into swēte
and sauour. The same Iesus (I saye) beyng
our Noble Loue, doth inforce to doe great
things and euermore stirreth vp to desire the
things that are more perfit. Loue will be a-
bone, and not kept still with any low things.
Loue will be free, and boyde from all worl-
dly affection,

The Imitation of Christ.

affection, least hir inwarde sight be hindered, or least it bee entwapped eyther wth some tempo^rall commoditie, or ou^rcome with incommuditie. Nothing is moze swete than Loue, nothing moze strong, nothyng moze deepe, nothing moze broade, nothing moze pleasant, nothing moze full. Nothing better eyther in Heauen or in earth: bycause it is sprung of God, and can not rest but in God, aboue all the creatures. The louer flyeth, runneth, reioyceth, is free, and is not holden: It giueth all thinges for all thinges, and hath all thinges in all thinges, as the which resteth in one highest thyng aboue all thynges, out of which floweth and spryngeth all goodnesse. It loketh not vpon hys gyftes, but turneth it selfe vnto the gyuer aboue all good gyftes. Loue canne not tell howe to keepe measure, but is seruente beyonde all measure. Loue seeleth no burthen, passeth nothing vpon paynes, endeuoreth aboue hir strength, nothyng at all waying whether the same bee possible to bee done or not, for as much as it thinketh nothyng to harde for it selfe, nothing vnlawefull. Therefore it is of force vnto all thinges, and bringeth manye thinges to an ende, if the louer doe not giue ouer and be tired. Loue watcheth, and sleeping doth

doth not slumber : laboꝝing is not wearyed :
pꝛessed downe, is not oppꝛessed: made afeard,
is not troubled : but (like as the liuely flame
and burning toꝝch) doth couet out vꝑwarde,
and doth pierce thozowꝑ safely. If any man
doe loue, he knoweth what this saying mea-
neth. The very ardent affection of the soule
is a great cry in the eares of the Lord, whilst
it sayth thus : O my God, O my loue , thou
art wholly mine, and I am thyne altogꝑther.
Bꝛing foꝝth in mee a plentifull loue , that I
maye learne with the inwarde mouth of my
heart to taske holwe swēte and pleasaunt a
thing it is to loue, and as it were being mol-
ten, to swim in loue. Cause that I maye so
burne in loue, that I may ouer come my selfe
with the feruentcy of my study and affection,
Let me sing the ballade of loue, let me follow
thē aloft my friende and loue, let mee sing
thy pꝛayses wꝑth so great Loue , that I
may be swallowed vꝑ thꝛough the feruentcy
of affection. Let me loue thē moꝛe than mine
owne selfe: Nay, let me loue neither my self,
noꝛ any man else beside (which doth leaue thē
in dēde) but both foꝝ thē, and in thē, like as
the lawe of loue shꝛining and casting hir bra-
mes out of thē, doth commaunde. Loue is
swift, sincere, godly, delectable and pleasant,
strong,

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strong, patient, faithful, wise, long suffering, manlike, and neuer applying it selfe to hyz owne commoditie. For when a man is giuen to himselfe, then doth loue fail away. Loue is circumspect, modest, straight, not daintie, not lyght, noz bent to vanities, sober, chaste, constant, quiet, and temperate in all the senses. Loue is subiect and obedient to his betters, alwaies vile and despised in his own conceit, vertuous and thankfull towards God, full of confidence and trust, and alwaies in hope, euen then when it selfe is lothed of God: For as much as without græse & paine there is no luying in loue. He that is not ready to suffer al things, & to apply himselfe to the wil of his friend & louer, & same is vntwozthy to be called a louer. In cōclusion, a louer must imbrace all hard & bitter things for his friends sake, & not to be deuided from him, bicause of aduerūtie.

Of the triall of the true Louer, and how the enimie must be resisted.

The .vij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne, thou art not yet a strong and wise Louer.

SERVANT. Why so Lord:

LORDE. Bycanse thou leauest off thine enterpryse for a small

small assault and temptacion, and seekest after comfort with ouer much greedinesse. A valyaunt Louer standeth still by temptacions, and doth not credite the crafty perswasions of the enimie: & is so delighted with prosperitie, that he is nothing offended with aduersity. The wise louer doth not so much way the gift of his Louer, as the loue of the giuer. The same rather considereth the minde and meaning, then the commoditie and profite: & in respect of his friend, neglecteth al his gifts. The noble Louer resteth not in the gift, but in mee aboue euery gift. Neither must thou forthwith discourage thy selfe, if at any time thou thinke otherwise then well either of me, or of my Godly seruantes against thy will. That good and swete affection wherewith thou art sometime delighted, is the affection of present fauour, and a certaine fozetaste of thy heauenly Countrey, vpon the which fozetaste thou must not stawe to much, bicause it suffereth alteration. But to fight against the wicked motions of the minde, and to despise the intisements of the Dewill, this (in deede) is the worke of vertue, and a thing worthe of great rewarde. Therefore there is no cause why these absurde imaginations shoulde so greatly bere and torment thee, that art wont to

Man's ioy
in trou-
bles.

to

The Imitation of Christ.

to arise of euery trifling occasion. Perseuere thou constantly in thy purpose and enterprise, and be of a sincere minde towards God. Neither is it an illusion that thou sometime art sodainely rauished aloft, and by and by doest returne againe to the olde sonde trifles of thy mind: which soasmuch as thou rather sufferest against thy will, than art the Author & causer of them, and dost struggle against them so long as they mylike thee, they are rather profitable than pernicious. Wæte thou that that olde enimie doth therevnto wholly bend himselfe to let thy study in godnesse, and to call thee away from al exercise of godlynesse, to wæte, from the deuoute Meditation and memoize of Christ his passion, from the warding and keeping of thy soule, from the firme purpose, to come forward in vertue. The wicked Fænde mynstreth great varietie of thoughts to beat a wearinesse and trembling feare into thee, to the intent he maye reuoke thee from prayer & reading of holy scripture. The humble confession of thy sins doth mislike him: & if he coulde, he woulde withdraw thee from the Communion. But beleue him not, nor passe not vpon him, though he cast his subtile snares and trappes ouer thee many times. When his suggestions are euil and filthy,

Note the
futtellie of
the Deuill
for two
causes.

filthie, turne them vpon him againe, and say thus vnto him. Be gone, thou vncleane spirit, blush thou wretch, and be ashamed thou vyle beast: Thou wicked deceyner, that doest put such things into my head, get thee hence from me. For thou shalt preuaile with me nothing at all. For Iesus my fellowe souldier will be present with mee, and thou shalt be overcome shamefully. I had rather die, and had rather suffer any thing in the worlde, then once consent vnto thee. Holde thy peace and be still, I wil not now heare thee though thou make me to haue a great deale of trouble. The Lord is my light and saving health, whome shall I feare: The Lord is the strength of my life: at whome shall I tremble: If whole armyes come against me, my soule shal not be afraid whilst the Lorde doth succour and deliuer me. Fight like a valiant souldier: and if thou row weakenesse thou take a fall at any time, take a better hart vnto thee againe, hauing a good hope of my fauour towardees thee, even greater then befoze: and in any wise beware of vaine arrogancie and pride, which is the cause that many men are led into errour, and doe sometime fall into blindenesse and ignorance almost incurable. Let that fall of the proude angels foolishly chalenging to much
to

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to themselves, cause thee to beware and to
liue in continuall modestie and humilitie.

Of modest hyding the benefites of God.

The.viij.Chapter.

LORDE.



Omne, it is both profitable and
safe or sure for thee to dissemble
the affection of godlinesse, and
not to extol the same in words,
in craking thereof somewhat
insolentlike, or to aduance the same aboue
measure, but rather to despise thy selfe, and
to lyue in feare, as one that hath the same vn-
worthylie bestowed vppon thee. Thou must
not to earnestly cleave fast vnto that affection
which may sone be changed into the contra-
rie. Thinke with thy self, so long as thou hast
Gods grace with thee, how wretched and nee-
de thou art wont to be without his grace: &
rechen not, that the commyng forwarde and
profiting in spirituall life doth only consist in
that point, to enioy the benefite of heauenlye
comfort: but also if thou modestly, tempe-
rately, and patiently, doe take the withdraw-
ing of the same, so that thou doe not faint and
waie dull, or slowe at that time in the great
desire

desire of pꝛaying, noꝛ suffer thy other accustomed exercises to bee wholly left and soꝛsaken, but after the best soꝛt that thou art able and knowest, doe that thing willingly which is in thy power, and not vtterly neglect thy dutie, foꝛ that dꝛyenesse oꝛ veration of minde which thou seelest in thy selfe. Foꝛ many. if it be not so well with them as they would haue it, doe become foꝛthwith impacient oꝛ slothfull. It is not alwaies in the power of man to rule and gouerne his owne matters : but it belongeth to God, both to giue & to comfort, both when he will, and howe much he wyll, and whome he will, and that alwaies as it liketh him best. Some being vncertaine and vnstayed haue cast themselves away fꝛo the study of godlinesse bestowed vpon them, whilst they endeuoring aboue their strength, doe not thoroughly consider their owne corruptiō and wickednesse, but rather followe the affection of their minde, then the iudgement of reason. By cause these fellows haue taken greater matters vpon the, then it was gods wil and pleasure they should, they haue quickly lost the fauor of God : and they which had made them a nest in heauen, euen those same became needy, vile, and soꝛsaken: to the intent that they, being pꝛessed downe and impo-
rished,

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risshed, might learne to flye, not with theyz
owne wings, but to staye themselves vppon
my Fethers. They which are yet but begin-
ners and vnskillfull of the waye of the Lorde,
vnlesse the same obey the counsaile of the wi-
ser sorte, they may sone be deceiued & thro-
wn downe headlong: and if the same haue ra-
ther yelded to their owne opinion, then obai-
ed the practised and beaten souldiers, those are
in the greater danger, bicause they woulde
not be retired from the opinion that they had
once conceyued in themselves. It is seldome
scene that one seeming wise in his owne con-
cepte, can modestly beare the commande-
ment of an other. Therefore it is better to
haue little wit with modesty, and slender vn-
derstanding of things, then for his abundant
knowledge to stand to much in his owne con-
cept. Better it is to haue lesse, then hauing
much to be proude. He doth not behaue him-
selfe circumspectly ynough, which betaketh
himselfe wholly vnto ioy, forgetting his olde
needinesse, and the chaste feare of the Lorde,
which feare is wont to stande in awe of lee-
sing the benefites alreadie bestowed vppon
him. Surelpe that person is not Godly wise
sufficiently, which behaueth hymselfe to des-
perately in the time of aduersitie and trou-
ble

ble, and thinketh and iudgeth of me with lesse trust and confidence then he ought to doe.
Hee that sheweth himselfe to carelesse in the tyme of peace, the same is often to much discouraged and saynte hearted in the time of warre. If thou haddest alwayes skill to shew thy selfe modest and of a lowelye minde, and to rule and gouerne thy spirites arpyght, thou shouldest not so sone fall into daunger & offence. It is a point of assurance, to cast what shal come after, if the light shal depart after thou hast conceiued the spirite of seruour and heate. And againe, when the same hath so chaunced in dedde, to think that the same light may returne againe, being therefore of mee withdrowne, that both thou mayest be made the moze warie, and I become thereby the moze glorious. For many times, such trial is moze expediet, then if thou shouldest alwaies enioy prosperitie, accozding as thou wouldest haue it. For the woorkes of Godlinesse & vertue doe not stande vpon that point, that thou shouldest be full of heauenly visions and comforts, or be skilful in learning or knowledge, or be placed in a high degræ: but if thou stay vpon true modesty: if thou be full of heauenly charity and loue: if thou alwaies studie for Gods glozy chastly and sincerely: if thou set

Al. j. naught

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naught by thy self, but vnfaignedly despise thy selfe, & also reioyce moze to be despised & pressed downe of other, then to be honored of the.

Of setting little by a mans selfe in the sight of God.

The. ix. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Dare speake vnto my Lorde, being my selfe but Dust and Ashes : and if I shoulde set somewhat by my selfe , yet doest thou stande against me, & my owne sinnes doe beare true witnessse against me : which witnessse I am not able to gaine say. But if I, by thinking my selfe vyle shall bring my selfe to nothyng, and (by casting all estimation of my self away from me) shall reckon my selfe but for dust , as I am indeed, the shall thy grace be fauorable vnto me, & thy lyght appzoch nere vnto my hart: & so shall it happen, that if I haue euer set by my selfe the least thing that can be, euen that shall banish away for euer, when I am altogether pressed downe vnto nothyng. Herein thys case thou shalt shewe vnto mee what I am, what I haue bene, and from whence I haue come. Namely, nothing, and from nothing :

Man counting hym-
selfe but
dust, shall
by grace ob-
taine the
faueur of
God.

thing: who if I be left once vnto my self, am
 forthwith nothing but mere infirmittie and
 weakenesse. But if thou haue sodainely looked
 backe vpon me, by and by I am made strong
 and am replenished with new gladnesse. And
 great wonder it is to see that I shoulde so
 dainely be lifted vp aloft, when thou doest so
 gently embrace me, which am of mine owne
 waight and prouesse alwaies caried vnto the
 lowest things. Thy loue freely preuenting me,
 and helping me in so many necessities, & de-
 fending mee from grievous perilles, and to
 speake truly, snatching me out of infinite e-
 uilles, is the cause of this thing. For I both
 haue lost my selfe in louing my selfe disorder-
 ly, and also haue found both my selfe & thee, in
 seeking thee onely, and in louing thee sincere-
 ly, & with the same loue also haue I the more
 plunged my selfe into nothing. For thou (O
 my most swete Lorde) dost bestowe more
 things vpon me, not onely then I am able to
 deserue, but also then I dare hope for: I will
 not saye craue for. O my G^oD, I giue thee
 thanks, that though I be unworthy of all
 goodnesse, yet thy nobilitie and infinite good-
 nesse both neuer cease to doe good vnto the in-
 gratefull, and to those that are turned far a-
 way from thee. I praye thee then vnto thee, that

The loue
 of God
 bringeth
 gladnesse.

God is
 more mer-
 ful then ei-
 ther we de-
 sire or de-
 serue.

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We may be thankfull, humble, religious, and
goodly, which are our helth, vertue, & strength.

That we ought to drue all our doings to gods
glory, as to the fardest ende or marke
that we shoote at.

The .x. Chapter.

LORDE.



Ome, I must be thy highest &
fardest ende, if thou desire to be
blessed and happy. By this in-
tent of thine shall thy witte bee
purged, being wickedly prone
many times to it selfe, & also to the creatures.
For as soone as in any thing thou studi-
est for thine owne commodity, thou fallest and wy-
therest as dry by and by in thy selfe. There-
fore thou must referre and direct all thinges
to mee onely, because I haue giuen al thinges:
and thou knowest that euery thing doth flowe
from me, as from the highest and most prin-
cipall goodnesse, and that therefore they are
to be reduced vnto me againe, as to their owne
fountaynes and spring. As well the small as
the great, as well the riche as the poore, doe
drawe liuely water out of me, as out of a liue-
ly fountaine: and they which serue me of their
owne accord, and after a free and honest sort,
shall

shall be laden with benefites vpon benefites. But if any will glory out of me, or be delighted with any private goodnesse, the same shall not obtaine perpetuall & true ioye with gladnesse of heart, but shall incurre diuers incommodities and anguishes of minde. Therefore oughtest thou to ascribe and impute no goodnesse nor no vertue, eyther to thy selfe or to any man liuing, but to acknowledge al things for Gods benefites, without whom man hath nothing. It is I that haue given all thing, & it is euen I also that doe challenge all things vnto my selfe, by god right, and with great seueritie doe require giuing of thanks. This is the truth, by which the vanity of mans glory is chased away. And who so shall be indued with heauenly fauour & true loue, the same shall neither be attached with enuie, nor discouraged in hart, nor shall be bolden with the loue of himselfe. For Gods loue overcommeth al things, and displayeth or spreadeth abroad all the powers of the soule. Nowe, if thou bee rightly wise, thou shalt reioyce in me onely, thou shalt put thy trust in me onely, according as G O D onely is good, to be praised aboue all things, and to be magnified in all things.

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That it is a sweete thing to serue God and to
despise the worlde.

The xi. Chapter.

SERVA VNT.



The Lord
careth for
the right-
eous.

Nowe will I speake againe, O
Lorde, & will not keepe silence,
and will speake after this sorte
in the eares both of my God, &
my Lorde, and my king, inha-
biting the high heauen. O how great is that
pleasure, O Lord, which thou hast reposed or
layed vpon them that feare thee: not onely
for them that loue thee but also for them
that serue thee with their whole heart. The
sweetenesse of the beholding of thee, is cer-
tainely vnspenkable; which thou givest vnto
thy Abouers: and in that point hast thou spe-
cially shewed forth the sweetnesse of thy loue,
that when I had no being; thou then diddest
make me: and afterwarde, when I went far
astray from thee, diddest bring me againe in-
to the waye, that I might serue thee, and didst
giue me in commandement to loue thee. O
fountaine of continuall loue, what may I say
to thee, or how may I forget thee, which hast
boughtasled to remember me; which contrary
to

to all hope, hast bled mercy toward me thine
 owne, and after that I was corrupted and
 perished, and hast wonne my heart vnto thee
 with thy fauor & friendship, when I did see no
 pleasure at all: For which liberalitie of thine,
 what thanks shal I render vnto thee againe?
 I will euen serue thee. But what great
 matter is it to serue thee, whome the whole
 worlde ought to serue? That rather seemeth
 great and wonderfull in thy sight, that thou
 vouchsafest to admit and take into thy service
 so needie, so vnwoorthy a person, and to chuse
 him into the number of thy beloved seruants.
 Beholde, all things are thine, whatsoeuer I
 haue or possesse, and by which I doe thee ser-
 uice. But howe is this, that thou doest more
 serue mee, than I doe serue thee? See, the
 heauen and the earth, which thou hast made
 for mans commodities, are at hande, and doe
 euery daye whatsoeuer thou comādest them
 to doe. Nay, thou hast made and ordained the
 Angels also for mans bles. But the verye
 greatest matter of all is, that thou thy selfe
 hast vouchsafed to serue man, and hast promi-
 sed that thou wilt giue thine owne selfe vnto
 him. For which thy infinite benefites, what
 thanke shall I peeble thee againe? I praye
 O O O I maye be able to serue thee in
 all.

All good
 things co-
 mēth of
 God.

Angels
 ordained
 for the be-
 nefit of man.

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all my life long. I praye God I may be such
a one, as may serue thee but euen one day as
I ought to doe. Thou in déede art worthe of
al seruice, of all honoꝝ, and everlasting praise,
Thou in déede art my Loꝝde, and I am thy
simple seruant, which am bound to serue thee
wyth all my strength, and nener to be filled
oꝝ satisfied wyth thy praises. And surely so I
will, so I doe desire: and whatsoeuer is wan-
ting vnto me, doe thou boughsafe to supplie
it. Great honoꝝ, great gloꝝy it is to serue thee,
and to despise al things foꝝ thy sake. Foꝝ they
shall carie with them great rewarde, that of
their owne accoꝝde haue put themselves in
subiection vnto this most holy seruice, & shall
finde the most pleasant comfoꝝt of the holye
Ghoꝝt, that haue renounced and cast awaye
woꝝldely pleasures foꝝ thy loue sake. Great
libertie of soule shall they attaine vnto, that
entring into the straight oꝝ narrow way foꝝ
thy name sake, haue contemned all woꝝldely
carkes and cares. A acceptable and pleasant
seruice of god, by the which man is made free
and holy in déede. A sacred state of Godlye
seruice, which maketh man equall to Angels,
accepted of G D D, terrible to Demills, and
commended of all faithfull. A seruice to bee
imbraced, and alwayes to be wished foꝝ, by
which,

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which, both the chiefest felicitie is procured,
and ioy gotten everlastingly.

That the desires of the minde are to be examined, and ordered.

The. xij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne, there yet remaine a
great many thinges that thou
must learne.

SERVANT. What be those,
Lorde?

LORDE. That thou submit thy desire altogether to my will and pleasure, and be not now a lover of thy selfe, but one coueting to doe as I will and commaunde. Desires doe kindle thee oftentimes, & vehemently insoyce oz dzine thee. In this case, consider thou whether thou be moued with my honoꝝ, oz stirred rather with thine owne comoditie. If oz if thou couet ought for my sake, thou wilt take in god worth whatsoever I shall determine: but if there lie hid any desire of priuate gaine, even the very same it is that doth hinder and way thee downe. Therfoze, beware that thou rest not too much vpon thy conceiued desire, without asking counsell of me, least perhappes it
repent

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repent thee afterwarde, and that doe then
displease thee, which at the first did like thee,
and which thou diddest seeke after as the be-
rry best thing. For neither every affection that
seemeth good, is by and by to be followed, nor
yet the contrary at the first chopt to be auoy-
ded. It is sometime also expedient to bypasse
good affects and desires, least either thou passe
measure with the importunitie of minde, or
be an offence vnto other through thine owne
vnrulinesse: or whilst the same do resist, thou
as one troubled, sodainely doe fal. Sometime
it is meete to vse violence, & to fight against
the appetie and desire, and not to make ac-
count what the flesh would either haue or
not haue, but rather endeuor that it maye be
obedient to the spirit, whether he will or no:
and that thee may be so long kept vnder and
suffer bondage, vntill such time as she be ply-
ant and readie vnto all things, and learne to
be content with a fewe things, and to be de-
lighted with a simple state and condition, and
not to mutter or grutch against any incom-
moditie or aduersitie.

The flesh
ought to
be obedient
to the spi-
rite.

Of the maner of pacience, and the fight
against desires.

The .xij. chapter.

SERVANT

SERVANT.



Wy then, O my Lorde God, as farre as I doe perceiue, pacyence and sufferance is very necessary for me. For many aduersities are incident vnto this life of ours: in so much that when I desire peace by all meanes possible, yet can it not be brought about, that I may leade ouer my life without warre and sorow.

LORDE. It is even as thou doest saye, sonne: For, I will not haue thee to seeke after that peace, that is boyde of temptacions, or which seeth not aduersities: but to thinke with thy selfe, that euen then also thou hast founde thy selfe peace, when as thou shalt be searched and tryed with sundrye and manye turmoyling calamities of miseries, and aduerse chaunces. Now, if thou wilt plead, that thou art not able to beare or suffer so manye things, how then shalt thou be able to abyde the everlastyng torment of Hell fire? Of two euilles the lesse is alway to be chosen. There, Of two euilles the
 fore, studie to take pacyently for Gods sake least is to
 thy present euilles, that thou mayest escape be chosen,
 those everlastyng punishmentes that are to come. And thinkest thou that the men of this worlde, either suffer no euill at all, or little, or none?

The Imitation of Christ.

none : Thou shalt well finde, that euen those that are most delicate and fine, are not without their incommodities. Thou wilt say peraduenture : but these worldlings are incyted with many pleasures, and obeye their owne will oz sensualitie : and therefore make little account of their miseries. Put case al things happen vnto them as their heart would haue it : how long will that indure and abide, trow yee ? Forsooth, those shall perishe like dung, which in this life haue such wealth and abundance, in such wise, as no maner of remembrance of ioyes passed shall remaine. Nay, euen while they be aline to, they doe not enioy them without bitternesse and grise, & feare. For looke of what things they doe take pleasure, of the very same manye times they receiue sorrow : and reason good they shoulde so doe : that they which intemperately hunt after pleasures, shoulde likewise attaine vnto the same not without tartnesse and trouble. I wisse, they be all but very short, and false oz counterfeyte, and inordinate, filthie oz dishonest : yet doe not they see this through drunkennesse and blindenesse, but that they wyl needes purchase themselves death of the soule like vnto brute beastes, for a small oz trisyng delight of this mortall life. Wherefore, sonne,
doe

doe not thou follow the sensuall desires, but turne thy wil away from them. Be delighted in the Lorde, and so shall he graunt thee the requestes of thy soule. For if thou wilt be delighted in deede, and haue large and plentifull comfort of me: Wete thou that felicitie and the ample rewarde of comfort doth consist in thy renouncing of all worldly things, and of these feeble and weake pleasures: and the further thou shalt pull thy selfe from all solace of humane thinges, so much the more sweete, and the greater comfort shalt thou finde in mee. But in deede thou shalte not attaine vnto those comforts without sorrowfulnesse and labour of fighting. For rooted custome doth stande against it: howbeit thee shall be matched and maystered, with better custome. The flesh will mutter against it: Howbeit thee shall be bidden with the feruentye of the spirit. The olde Serpent will stirre thee forward and sharpen thee: Howbeit he shall be chased away with prayers: And againe, with profitable labour a great entraunce shall be stopped vp from his temptacions.

Of obeying our betters according to the example of our Lorde Iesus Christ.

The Imitation of Christ.

LORDE.

Obedience
to thy su-
perior re-
quired of
God.



Omne, hee that withdraueth
himselfe from obedience, the
same withdraueth himselfe fro
the fauor of God: and he that
seeketh after priuate thinges,
doth so: go the common. He that doth not sub-
mit himselfe vnto his superioꝝ gladly and of
his owne accorde, the same in so doing, decla-
reth that he hath not yet so wholly tamed and
schooled his owne fleshe, but that it doth often-
times wince & mutter against him. Where-
foze, learne speedily to submit thy selfe to thy
superioꝝ, if thou couet to tame thy fleshe. For
the outwarde enymie is the soner maistred,
if the inwarde enymie be once ouerthꝝowne.
There is no moze troublesome oꝝ worse eni-
my vnto the soule than thou art vnto thy selfe,
whilst thou doest not agree with thy spirite.
For thou must practise an vnfeined contempt
of thy selfe, if thou wilt be maister ouer fleshe &
bloud: for as much as thou doest yet lone inoꝝ-
dinately, and therfoze art askearde to commit
thy selfe altogether to the will of another. But
what great matter doest thou, thou doest
nothing, if thou become subiecte to another
man for Gods sake? Whereas I heeing that
Almightie and that Highest, who haue made
all

all things of naught, haue humbly submitted my selfe vnto man for thy sake, becommynge the veriest vnderling and basest of all other, to the ende that thou mightest ouercome thys pryde and haughtinesse of thine, with that humilitie and lowlinesse of mine. Learne to obey, thou dust: learne to depresse thy selfe, thou earth and ASIME, and to put thy trust vnder all mens fete: learne to breake thine owne will, and to shewe thy selfe subiect vnto all men. **W**are earnest against thy selfe, and suffer not pryde or haughtinesse to lyue in thee, but make thy selfe so lowlye and simple that all men may go ouer thee and treade vppon thee like mire in the streete. **W**hat hast thou thou vaine man, that thou canst rightly complain off: **W**hat is there, thou sincke of sinne, that thou canst iustly reply vnto the that dispraise and deface thee, in asmuch as thou hast so oftentimes deserved hel torments by offending of God so many times: And yet haue I gently spared thee, hauing a care of thy soule, to the intent that thou mightest alwaies shewe thy selfe thankfull for my benefites, my loue beyng once knowne vnto thee: and being euer moze bent vnto true obedience and modesty, mightest patiently beare the contempt of thy selfe.

Of

The Imitation of Christ.

Of considering the secret iudgements of God,
least we shoulde aduaunce our selues to
much in prosperitie.

The .xv. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Lorde, thou thundring agaynst
me with thy iudgements, doest
shake all my lims with feare &
trembling, & doest out of mea-
sure terrifie my hart. This doe
I ponder vpon amazedly, that the very Hea-
uens are not cleane in thy sight. And if thou
haue founde sinne in the very aungels them-
selues, & hast not spared them, what shal then
become of me? If the Starres themselues
haue fallen from heauen, what may I (being
dust) hope for? They haue fallen down to the
lowest places, whose works did seeme lauda-
ble and praise worthy: and they that did eate
the bread of Aungels, those saue I to be de-
lighted with Hogs meate and drasse. There-
fore Lorde, there is no holinesse, if thou once
plucke backe thy hande: No wisdom pre-
uaileth, if thou cease to gouerne: No strength
helpeth, if thou leanest to keepe and preserve:
No chastitie is in safetie, vnlesse thou de-
fende

sende it : For keeping of a mans selfe doth
 profite, vnlesse thy holpe watching go with
 all. For being once forsaken, we are brow-
 ned and doe perishe, and when thou doest take
 care ouer vs, then we liue erected and lyfted
 vp. We are in our owne respect but vncon-
 stant: Of thee we be confirmed and strength-
 ned: we are but warme of our selues, & of thee
 we are kindled. Surely, I must thinke of my
 selfe most humbly and basely, & must altogi-
 ther way my selfe at nothing, if that I seeme
 to haue any goodnesse in me. I say again, that
 I ought to submit my selfe most lowlye vnto
 those thy vnsearchable iudgments, wherein I
 finde that I am nought else but nothing of no-
 thing. A waight without mesure: A sea that
 cannot be passed thorow, wherein I finde my
 self to be nothing, but altogether of nothing.
 Where is then the couert of glozy? Where
 is then the confidence of glozie for the which
 thou hast bargayned? Al vaine glozy is swal-
 lowed vp in the gulfie of thy iudgements that
 thou hast of me. What are all mortall men in
 thy sight? Clay may boast it selfe against the
 Potter, belike. Can he ware proued w vaine
 praisses, whose mind is subiect vnto god in the
 truth: No, though the whole worlde doe extol
 him, after that the truth hath once made him

Man of
 himself vn-
 constant:
 but by god
 confirmed
 & strength-
 ned.

All men
 mortall in
 the sight of
 God.
 Isai. 29.

The Imitation of Christ.

When shall
fade & con-
sume away,
but the lord
abideth for
euer.

subject vnto it: I say, he shall be moued with
no bodiles prayles, that hath fixed his whole
hope in God. For euen al they that do speake,
are but nothing, and shall fade away with the
sounde of their owne wordes: But the truth
of the Lord abideth for euer.

Psal. 116.

How we must be minded, and what we ought
to saye in such things as we de-
sire to haue.

The.xvi.Chapter.

LORDE.

Iob. 4.



Anne, thus must thou saye in
all thinges: Lorde, if it shall
please thee, let it bee euen so.
Lord, if this shal be to thine ho-
nour, bee it done in thy name.
Lorde if thou see that this shall be expedient
and profitable for me, bring it to passe, that I
maye vse it to thine honour: but in case thou
know that it shall not be for the health of my
soule, but hurtfull therevnto, take this desire
from me. For euery desire is not of the holpe
spirite, although it seeme right and good vnto
man: but harde it is to iudge whether a good
or a wicked spirite doe enforce thee, to couet
after this or that, or whether thou bee moued
rather within thine owne spirite: Many men
haue bene deceyued at the last, which dyd
seme

seeme to be stirred at the first with a good spirit. Wherefoze we must alwayes couet with the feare of God, & lowliness of mind, what soeuer cometh into our heads, by occasion to wishe for; and the whole matter must be committed to God with vnfained chiding of our selues, and thus must we say: Lord, thou knowest whether of both is moze expedient for me, do thou whether of both thou wilt thy self. Giue me that thou wilt, and as much as thou wilt, and at what time thou wilt. Deale with me as thou knowest it meete for me to be delt with al, and as it liketh thee, and as the thing may procure greatest glorie vnto thee. Place me there where thou wilt, & deale freely with me in al things. I am in thy hands: turne me andASSE me euery way. Beholde, I thy seruant am prest vnto al things: for as much as I desire to liue (I pray God accordingly and persitely) not vnto my selfe, but vnto thee.

we ought
to desire no
thing, but
wyth the
feare of
God.

Pryaers to performe Gods will.

The. xviij. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Haunt vnto me, O most bountifull Iesu, thy fauour, which may be assistant vnto me, may labour with me, may continue wyth mee to the verie ende.

A.ij.

Grant

The Imitation of Christ.

Graunt vnto me euermore to will and conet
the thinges which are acceptable and deare
vnto thee. Let thy will be my wil, and let my
will alway follow thine, and iustly agree with
thine. Let one willing & one nilling be com-
mon vnto vs both, in such wise, that I maye
will or nill nothing, but that which thou wyl-
lest or nillest. Graunt me to die vnto al thinges
that are in the worlde, and to loue to be con-
temned and not knowne in this worlde for thy
sake. Graunt me (aboue all my wishes) to re-
pose and rest my self in thee, and to haue a qui-
et and contented minde. Thou art the true
peace of the heart: Thou art the onely rest:
out of thee are al thinges difficult and vnquiet.
In this peace, that is to say, in thee onely be-
ing the chiefest and euerlasting goodnesse,
will I sleepe and take my rest.

God gi-
ueth the
true peace
of y hart.
Psal. 4.

That true comfort must be sought
for in God onely.

The xviij. Chapter.

No seem-
fort in this
worlde to be
looked for,
but in the
worlde to
come.



Whatsoeuer comfort I can wish
for or imagine, the same doe I
not loke for here in this worlde,
but in the worlde to come. Now,
if I (alone) had euene all the
comforts

comforts that are any where, and coulde enioy all maner delicates and dainties: certaine it is, that the same could not long continue or endure. Therfore (O my soule) thou canst not attaine full comfort, & be perfectly refreshed, sauing onely in God, the comforter of the needy, and the helper of the modest. Loke a little while, O my soule, loke a little while after Gods promise, and then thou shalt attaine plentie of all good things in heauen. Now, if thou wilt somewhat inordinately couet these present things, thou shalt leese the everlasting and heauenly things. Let temporall things be in vse and occupying: but let the everlasting things be in thy desire: Thou canst not be filled with anye temporall good thing, because thou wast not created to enioye the same. Albeit thou haddest all good things that are created, yet couldest thou not be blessed notwithstanding: Nay, thy felicitie consisteth in God the creator of all things. I meane not such as is thought so, and praised of the foolish worldlings, but such as the good & faithfull Disciples of Christ doe looke after, & such as the spiritual and cleane of hart, whose conuersation is in heauen, do sometime forgetasse in this life. Vaine and short is all mans comfort: blessed and true is that which is recey

Psal. 9. 68.
72.

Use temporal things: and desire everlasting things.

The Imitation of Christ.

The say-
ings, of the
godly.

Psal. 102.

ued inwardly from the truth. The godly per-
son doth euery where cary Iesus Christ hys
comforter about with him, & doth speak vnto
him in this wise: Lord Iesus, be assisting vn-
to me in all places and at all times. Let thys
be my comfort, to be boyde of all mans com-
fort with a good will. Or if thy comfort shall
be lacking at any time, let thy will and due
tryall of me be in steade of thy chiefest com-
fort vnto me. For thou art not he that ener-
moze art angry or makest ascarde.

That all carefulnesse is to be com-
mitted to God.

The .xix. Chapter.



Onne, let mee deale with thee
as I will my selfe: I doe know
what is for thy profite. Thou
imaginest as a man, and doest
so thinke in manye thinges as
thy fleshy minde doth counsell thee.

SERVANT. Lorde, thou sayest truth: thou
hast greater care ouer me, than I could haue
of my selfe. For he standeth but after a sickle
sort vndoubtedly, which committeth not hys
whole care vnto thee. Lorde, vse me as thou
list, so that my will toward thee doe continue
right

right and stedfast. For it can not be but good,
whatsoever thou shalt determine of me.

Therefore, whether thou wilt haue me to be in
darknes still, I praise it: or whether thou wilt
haue me to enjoy light, that doe I also praise:

Or whether thou vouchsafe to comfort me, I
praise it: or whether thou wilt haue me to be
pressed downe in aduersity, I praise this also:

LORDE. Sonne, so thou must be mynded in
deede, if thou desire to haue to doe wpyth mee:
neyther oughtest thou to be lesse cherefull to
suffer, than to reioyce, more vntwillingly nee-
die and poore, than full and welthie.

SERVANT. Lorde, I will willingly suffer we ought
for thy sake whatsoever thou wylt haue to to suffer.
happen vnto mee: and I wyll receyue at thy willinglie,
handis alike, both good and euill, both sweete whatsoe-
and sowre, both loye and sorrowe, and giue uer doth
thee thanks to for all things that haue chaun- happen fro
ced vnto mee: Preserue mee from all sinne the Lorde.
and so shall I feare neyther death, nor Hell,
and so that thou doe neuer tourne me off or
blot me out of the booke of life, there shall bee
no calamitie that shall hurt mee.

That the miseries of this life must be suffered
patiently according to Christs example.

The .xx. Chapter.

LORDE.

The Imitation of Christ.

L O R D E.

God descended from
heauen, and
tooke our
myseries
vpon him,
not of ne-
cessitie, but
of loue.



Orne, I descended from Hea-
uen for thy sake, and toke thy
miseries vpon me: not for any
necessitie, but for very loue that
moued me therunto, to the in-
tent that thou mightest learne paci-
ence, and mightest take temporall mi-
series without disdayne & grutch. From the
holmer of my birth, till such time as I ended
my life vpon the crosse, there were neuer sor-
rows wanting to be suffered. I toke paci-
ently the great lack of necessary things: I oft-
times heard sundry complaints of me: I toke
flaunders & reproches in good worth: I had
vnikindnesse for benefits: Cursing and euill
speakinges for miracles: reproches and fault
findeings for my doctrine.

Heb. 12.

SERVANT. Lord, for as much as thou hast
shewed thy self patient in this life. (Wher-
in surely thou diddest most of al do the comma-
ndement of thy father) meete & reason it is, that
I wretch and sinful man should shew my self
patient according vnto thy will, and shoulde
beare the burthen of this mortall lyfe for my
soule health sake, so long as thou wilt haue it
so. For though this present life be left burden-
some, yet hath it bene made alreadye more
light,

light by thy benefite, and both by thy example
more tollerable and famous vnto the weak-
lings, and also by the footesteps of thy saints:
yea much more full of comfort also, then it
was once in the olde Law, when both heauen
gate did continue shut, and the way did seeme
somewhat hard to finde, & so fewe did passe to
seeke for the kingdome of heauen: Nay, also
euen those which then were iustified and in the
state of saluation, could not enter y^e kingdome
of Heauen before thy passion and the merite
of thy precious death: How great thanks am
I bound to render vnto thee, in that thou hast
boughtsafed to shew the straight and good way
to thy everlasting kingdome, both to me, and
to all them that put their trust in thee: For
thy way is our way, and through godly paci-
ence doe we earnestly traueyle to come vnto
thee our crowne and rewarder, who vnlesse
thou hadst gone before vs, and haddest taught
vs, what man woulde haue passed to followe?
How many woulde not only haue bidden be-
hind, but also a great way off, except they had
behelde and looked vpon these thy notable ex-
amples. And if when we haue heard so many
of thy miracles and commaundements, & yet
are but warme, howe woulde it be then if wee
had not so great light to followe thee?

Of

The Imitation of Christ.

Of the bearing of iniuries and wrongs & who
it is that is pacient in deede.

The .xxj. Chapter.

LORDE,

The passio
of Christ &
the martir
dome of his
Saintes
ought to be
our cōfort.

Heb. 11. & 12.



Onne, what is this that thou
speakest? Ceasse from cōplaint
and moane: consider both my
passion, and the martirdome of
other saints. Thou hast not yet
resisted vnto death. It is but little that thou
sufferest, if thou be compared with the, which
haue suffered so many things, haue ben temp-
ted so vehemently, haue bene afflicted so gre-
uously, haue bene tried and exercised so ma-
ny waies. Therefore, other mens cases being
more greuous, must bee called to minde of
thee, that thou maiest take this more tolera-
ble case in better part: or if thou doe not think
it so tollerable, see that thine owne impatience
be not cause hereof: and in fine, whether it bee
tollerable or intollerable, endeuor thou to take
it patiently throughtout. For the better that
thou shalt settle thy selfe to be pacient, both by
so much shalt thou deale the more wisely in the
matter, and shalt deserue the greter things,
and shalt more easily beare thy case, as one
not flouthfully framed readie in minde & vse
there.

therevnto. Neither shalt thou thus say to thy self: I neither am able, nor ought to bere this thing at y mans hands. For he hath both done me a great displeasure or hurt, & slaundereth me with other things that I neuer thought. In dede I can be content to beare that at another mans hands, that I shal see good to be borne. This is the thought of foolishnesse, it neyther considereth the vertue of pacience, nor yet of whome it must be crowned and rewarded, but rather wayeth the persons, & the wrongs done vnto it. He is not truly pacient, that will suffer but as much as he list, and of whome he listeth: but the man that is pacient in dede, maketh no account of whome hee is bered and troubled, whether he be his better, his equall, or his inferiour: whether he be good and godly, or else peruerse and wicked: Nay, whatsoeuer aduersity is done vnto him of any man liuing, looke how much, and how oftentimes soeuer the same be done, he recepueth the same thankfully as it were from Gods hands, & reckoneth it for gaine: because nothing is so great or so smal, if a man suffer the same for Gods sake, but that it deserveth reward. Wherefoze be thou in a readinesse to battaile, if thou wilt obtaine the victorie. Surely, without fighting, thou shalt neuer get the crowne

He is pacient that suffereth all thinges of all men.

of

The Imitation of Christ.

of patience. Now, if thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be crowned, but if thou desire to be crowned, strive like a man, & beare the fight patiently. For neither is rest gotten without labour, nor yet victory procured without fighting.

SERVANT. Wring to passe lord, that through thy benefite, I may be able to doe, that which me thinke, I am unable to do by naturall power. Thou knowest well that I (otherwise) of my selfe can beare but litle, & that I am some cast down & discouraged, eue with a light fall. Wring it to passe that al misery and aduersity may be vnto me amiable, & to be wished for, for thy names sake. For it is very helthful vnto my soul to suffer, & to be vexed for thy cause.

Of the confession of a mans owne infirmitie, and of the miseries of this life.

The .xxij. Chapter.

Psal. 13.



Orde, I will confesse vnto thee mine vnrightheousnesse and infirmitie or weakenesse. A small matter doth manye times discourage me, and cast mee into heavinesse. Sometime I determine to holde my self stoutly and valsauntly; and by and by with a small chaunce of aduersitye, I am in great trouble and sorowe. A most grievous temptation

temptaciō doth grow of a most vile thing: & I
 that thought to my self that I did not behold
 it, when as I did not feele it, euen I the same
 doe perceiue that I am almost ouerthrowne
 sometime with alight & slender blast. **W**her- Psa. 9. & 24.
 fore, **O** Lord, looke vpon my humilitie & frail-
 ty, being perfectly known vnto thee: haue pittie Psal. 68.
 vpon me & deliuer me out of this mire, lest be-
 ing drowned, I perishe vtterly. This thing
 doth oftentimes bere me at the hart, & maketh
 me ashamed in thy sight, to thinke that I am
 so frayle, & so weake to resist my troublesome
 affections: which though they doe not drawe
 me wholly to consent vnto them, yet is the ver-
 ation of them greuous & painefull vnto mee:
 and it very much yzketh me to liue every day
 in stryfe after such sort. And hereby is myne
 owne infirmittie made plaine and manifest
 vnto me, bycause wicked thoughts doe much
 sooner inuade me, than depart frō me. **W**ould wicked
thoughts
sooner in-
uade man,
than de-
parte from
him.
 to God thou wouldest looke vpon my labors
 and sorrows, **O** most mighty God of Israel,
 and most desirous of faithfull soules, & woul-
 dest prosper all my enterprises. Strengthen
 me with heauenly strength, least olde Adam
 my wretched fleshe, not yet wholly subiecte
 vnto my spirite, doe maister or beare rule
 ouer me, against which I must fight, so long
 as

The Imitation of Christ.

**Tempta-
cions follow
temptaci-
ons.**

**The world
deceitfull
& vaine.
1. Ioan. 2.**

as the breath is in this most wretched body of mine, most wretched I saye, bicause calamities and miseries are neuer wanting therein, bicause al things are therein full of snares, & enymies. For temptacions doe followe temptacions: yea, also, whilst the first conflict doth yet endure, diuers other do come in the necke of it, we not so much as thinketh of anye such matter. Can then this life be loued, which hath so manye bytter tastes, and is subiect to so many miseries and calamities? Or yet may it rightly be termed life, which causeth so manye deathes & plagues? yea, for all that it is loued, and in the same do many men hunt after pleasures. The worlde is manye times dispraised, bicause it is so deceitfull & vaine: and yet is it hardly forsaken, bicause the desires of the flesh doe beare to great a sway. For some things doe allure to loue it, other some doe allure man to despise it. To loue it, the desire of the flesh and the eyes doth allure, and the pride of his life: The punishments and miseries that doe followe after are cause of the hate and y^eksomnesse of the same. But alacke for pittie, wicked pleasure doth maister the mind, being bent vnto the world, so that it is kept in delight with the ticklings of the senses, when as yet neyther it hath
seene

ſeene nor taſted of the pleaſantneſſe of God, & the inwarde ſwætenefſe of vertue, But they which vtterly contemne the worlde, and ende, nor to line vnto god, vnder holy diſcipline, the ſame are not ignorant of the promiſſed ſwætenefſe in God, to them that haue wholly reſouced themſelues: and againe, doe ſee howe lamentably or græuouſly the worlde wandreth and how diuerſly it is deceiued.

That we muſt reſt & reſoſe our ſelues in God aboute all good things and giſts.

The .xxiii. Chapter.



Rest thou alwaies in **G O D** aboute all things, & in al thinges, **O** my ſoule. For he is the euerlaſſing reſt of the Saintes and godly men. Graunt me, **O** moſt ſwæte and louing Jeſus, to reſoſe my ſelfe in the aboute all thinges in the worlde: aboute all health and beautie, aboute al glozy and honoꝝ, aboute all power and dignitie, aboute all knowledge and witte, aboute all riches and Artes, aboute al ioy and triumphant reſoyſing, aboute all fame and praïſe, aboute all ſwætenefſe and comfozte, aboute all hope and promiſe, aboute all deſerte and deſire, aboute all giſtes and offices, which thou canſt giue and poure forth, aboute all gladneſſe and ſoye of voyce, which the

God the
 comfoꝛter
 of thoſe
 that reſoſe
 their truſt
 in him.

The Imitation of Christ.

God the
creator,
& gouer-
nor of all
thinges
both in
heaven and
earth.

the minde is able to comprehend and seele:
To be short, aboue al Angels & Archangels,
aboue the whole Army of heauen, aboue all
visible and invisible thinges, and aboue all
whatsoever thou art not, O my GOD. For
thou art, O my God, the best of all other: thou
onely art most mighty, thou onely art most
plentifull and most full: thou onely art most
pleasant and most able to cause comfort: thou
onely art most bountifull and most amiable.
Thou onely of all other art most noble most
glorious: In thee onely rest all good thinges, &
the same perfit, both are, and haue bene, & shal
be. And therefore, it is both lesse little, what-
soever thou giuest vnto mee besides thy selfe,
or doest vtter vnto me & promise as touchyng
thy self, being not yet seene nor fully attained
vnto. For my mind can not soundly take rest,
nor be contented sufficiently with that which
is present, except it, passing by all gifts and al
worldly thinges, doe repose it selfe in thee. O
my most sweete spouse Iesus Christ, a most
pure louer, Lord of the whole worlde, would
God I had wings of true libertie to flie vnto
thee, and to rest my self in thee. O Lord, when
shall it be lawfull wholly to employ my wit, &
to see how pleasant thou art, O my Lord God:
When shall I at the length settle all my po-
wers

Psal. 54.

Psal. 33.

wers in thee, in such wise that for very loue of
 thee, I may not now seele my selfe, but thee
 onely, after an incredible maner of feeling, &
 that not knowne to euery man: Now, I doe
 many times sigh, and doe beare my infelicity
 with sorrow, because many evils do occurre in
 this vale of miseries, which doe trouble mee
 oftentimes, make me sad & pensine, darcken
 mine vnderstanding, many times doe let, di-
 stract, allure, shackle and entangle me, that I
 may not haue free accessse vnto thee, nor enjoy
 thy pleasant embracements, being alwayes
 present with thy blessed spirits. Let so many
 sighs, so many painfull cares of mind, which
 I beare out in the world, moue thee. O Iesu,
 the brightnesse of glozy euerlasting, the solace
 of the wandring soule: my mouth is with thee,
 boyde of wordes, and my silence both speake
 vnto thee. How long doth my Lorde God for-
 slow his comming: Let him come vnto mee
 his poore soule, and make me ioyfull: & stret-
 ching forth his hand, let him deliuer a wretch
 out of all perplexitie of minde. Come, come, I
 say: For without thee, there shal be no day, no
 nor no howe quiet, because thou art my ioye,
 without whome my table is boyde & emptye.
 I am a wretch, and know not after what sort
 I am pressed downe, as it were, with impy-
 sonment

The Imitation of Christ.

Nothing
ought to be
lyked oz
sought for
moze then
God and
godlinesse.

sonment and setters, vntill thou refreſhe me
with the light of thy preſence, and ſet me at
liberty and ſhewe me thy friendly & louyng
countenance. Let other men ſeke what they
liſt in the ſtead of thee: but as for me, nothing
either liketh oz ſhall like me elſe ſaue thee. O
my God my hope and euerlaſting ſaluation,
I will neuer holde my tongue: I will neuer
ceale to pray, vntill thy fauor doe returne, and
thou ſpeake vnto me at home.

IESVS. Behold, I am here preſent with thee,
bicauſe thou haſt called vpon me: thy teares & de-
ſire of mind, & diſcouragment, & anguiſh haue
called me vnto thee in ſtirring me vnto pittie.

SERVANT. I O Lord, haue called vpon
thee, as one deſirous to enioy thy preſence, be-
ing ready to reſuſe al things for thy ſake. For
thou diddeſt firſt ſtirre me vp to ſeke thee: as
touching which thing, I yeeld thee thanks, O
Lord, which haſt done ſo great a benefite vn-
to me thy ſervant, according to thy ſingular
mercy. In ſine, what needeth many words, oz
what remayneth elſe beſides, ſauiug that I
ſubmit my ſelfe very modeſtly vnto thee, as
one mindful enermoze of mine owne vnrigh-
teouſneſſe and vilenelle: For no man is like
vnto thee any where, in all thoſe wonderfull
things which are contained in heaue & earth.

Thy

Thy woꝝks, O Loꝝd, are good aboue meſure: Gen. i.
thy ſentence is true, & al thinges are gouerned Pſal. 12.
by the helpe of thy pꝛouidence. Wherefoꝛe,
pꝛaiſed and gloꝛified be thou, O wiſdome of Pſal. 33. &
the Father: let both my ſoule and my mouth 148.
together with all the creatures of the woꝛlde
pꝛaiſe and ſet foꝛth thee.

Of the recounting of ſo many benefites of God

The xxxij. Chapter.



Phen O Loꝛde, the eyes of my Pſal. 118.
minde, and teach me to liue ac-
coꝛding to the commaunde-
ments of thy lawe. Cauſe that
I may vnderſtande thy wyll,
and may recount with great reuerence & dili-
gent conſideration thy benefites beſtowed, a-
wel tpon all men, as alſo vpon me, that ther-
by I may giue thanks accoꝛdingly. Although
to ſay the truth, I am not able ſufficiently to
pꝛaiſe the leaſt part of the ſame: and ſo much
it wanteth that I am able to ſet foꝛth ſo many
giſts & benefites beſtowed vpo me, that whilſt
I conſider thy bolontie & liberality, my ſpirite
ſayleth me through the greatneſſe thereof.

For what thyng ſoeuer we poſſeſſe, eyther of Pſal. 118.
minde, oꝛ of bodie, either without, oꝛ withi-
n, both naturall and againſt nature, thoſe ſame

¶ ij.

are

The Imitation of Christ.

are thy benefites, and doe commend thy liberalitie, bountie, and goodnesse, of whome we haue receiued all good things. Nowe, if one man haue receiued moze or fewer gifts than another hath, surely they are all thine: & without thee, the least thing of all may not be had. Now if any man haue gotten greater gifts, the same can not boast of his owne desert, nor extoll himselfe aboue other men, or triumphe ouer him that hath lesser giftes. For euery man is so much the greater and the better, as the same doth the lesse attribute and ascribe vnto himselfe, and as he is the moze modest & Godlie in giuing of thanks: and looke how much the moze euery man doth thinke himself most vile and most unworthy of al other, so much the fitter is he same to obtaine greater things at thy handes. Again, if one haue gotten fewer gifts, the same ought not to bee soze, or to take it heauily, or to enuie at him that is richer in gifts, but rather to beholde thee, and most of all to praise thy goodnesse, in that thou giuest thy giftes so plentifully, so willingly, without any respecte or difference of persons. All thynges are of thee, and therfore art thou to be praised in all things: and thou knowest what is expedient to be giuen vnto euery man: yea, it is not soz vs but soz thee to iudge.

Modestie
is y^e bl^e of
Gods be-
nefit^s.

judge why this man hath lesse, and he more,
which thoroughly perceiuest what thing is con-
uenient for euery man. Therefore, O Lorde
God, I reckon & account it for a great bene-
fite also, to haue but fewe things which maye
seeme after the fashion of the worlde to bee
praised and gloried in. And thus I determine
that man ought not onely and to be vered to
sorrow for his owne vilenesse & lack of helpe,
and to be discouraged in mind, but also to take
therof great comfort and ioy, bicause thou, O
God doest chosse the naked and lowly, and to
such as are despised in the face of the worlde,
to be thy familiars & household seruants. Thy
Apostles themselves are witnesses hereof,
which being made chiefe of the whole world
by thee, did shewe themselves so modest, so
simple, so void of all malice & guile, that they
did not onely refraine from complainings,
but also did reioyce to be taken vp with re-
prochful words & rebukes for thy name sake,
and did most greedily embrace those thinges,
which other men doe detest & flee from. Ther-
fore nothing ought so much to cære by a loue
of thee, and one that acknowledgeth thy be-
nefits, as the knowledge of thy will and ever-
lasting decreë, with the which he ought so to
be content, and so to accept and take it in good
worth,

The Imitation of Christ.

The will
and loue of
God, ought
to ouercom
all things.

worth, that he desire no lesse to be the least of
all other, then another man desireth to be the
greatest, and doe no lesse take in good parte &
content himselfe with the lowest place, then
with the highest, & is no lesse willingly despised
& abset and a seely soule of no reputacion,
then he is to be the most noble & greatest of all
other. For thy will, and the loue of thy hono-
r ought to ouercome all things, & to comfort him
more, and please him more, then all benefits,
either bestowed, or to be bestowed vpon him.

Of foure things which doe procure peace.

The xxv. Chapter

LORDE.



Omne, I will now teach thee the
way of true peace and libertie.

SERVANT. Doe Lorde, as
thou sayst: For it is welcome
to me to heare this.

LORDE. Endeavour, sonne, to doe the will
of another, rather than thine owne will. Haue
alwaies lieffer to haue lesse than more. Al-
waies seeke for the lowest place, and desire to
obey all men. Alwaies wish & pray that Gods
will may althoghter be done in thee. Vnderstand
both these things, weete thou that he entreateth
into

into the bounds of peace and quietnesse.

SERVANT. Lorde, this talke of thine, being but short, doth containe much perfection: and it is surely but small and slender in speaking, but yet both full of sense, and plentifull in fruit. And if I did faithfully obey the same, truly there should not be trouble and inquietnesse within me so soone: yea, so oftentimes as I feele my self vnquieted & grieved, I find my self to haue declined from this doctrine of thine. But thou, who art able to do al things, and alwayes louest the profiting & comming forward of mans soule, encrease thy liberallitie towards me I pray thee, that I may be able, both to doe as thou biddest, and also to attaine vnto everlasting salvation.

A prayer against euill thoughts.

The xxvi. Chapter.

SERVANT.



O my God, depart not from me: O my God, see thou helpe and succour me. For euill and wicked thoughts are within me, & also feares that do ber my soule: which thoughts by what means may I passe by, or breake in peces, without harming my selfe?

Ps. lxxij.

LORDE.

The Imitation of Christ.

LORDE. I will lead thee the way, and will p[re]sse downe mans power, and the p[ri]son dw[er]e beyng opened, will declare and make manifest my secrets and hid things vnto thee.

SERVANT. Doe so Lord, & chase all wicked thoughts away with thy countenance.

This is my onely hope & comfort, to flie vnto thee in al calamitie, to put my trust and confidence in thee, to cal vpon thee fr[om] the bottome of my hart, & patiently to await for thy comfort.

Prayers to obtaine the lightning of the minde.

God must
be prayed
vnto with
faith and
constant
patience.

The xxv. Chapter.



Give light vnto me, O good Ie-
su, with the brightnesse of thy
enerlasting light, & disperse all
maner darkenesse, as it were,
out of the house of my soule. Re-
p[re]sse so many outwandings, & beat downe
violent temptacions. Fight for me stoutly, &
ouercome the wicked beastes, which are the
desires of allurements, that peace maye bee
made, thzough thy power and vertue, & the ho-
ly Hall, which is my cleansed soule, may ring
& resounde with thy praises. Command the
winds and tempest, bid the Sea to be calme &
quiet, bid the blowing of the North winde to
ceasse, & there shal be great calmenesse. Send
thy

thy light and truth to gyue light vnto earth.
 For I am but rough and vngaine earth, till
 thou doest giue light vnto me. Poure out thy
 fauor from aboue: all to be spzinkle my soule
 with thy heauenly liberalitie: minister water
 of Godlynesse: which when the bypermost
 parte of the earth is once watered, may fetch
 out good, or rather the best fruite. Lift vp my
 mind, being pzedded down with the waight of
 sins, & hang vp my whole desire vpon heauen-
 ly things, that the swætenesse of the heauenly
 felicity being once tasted of, it may be tedious
 to thinke of earthly things. Deliuier me or ra-
 ther snatch me out of all comfort of woꝛldly
 things, nothing parmanent or durable. For
 no woꝛldly creature is able to alay and com-
 fort mine appetite or desire at all. Joyne mee
 vnto thee wyth the indissoluble bond of loue.
 For thou onely art sufficient for the louer, &
 wout thee al things are but frinolous & vaine.

Of the auoyding of curious enquire how
 another man doth liue.

The .xxvij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Drine, be not curious, or haue
 superfluous cares in thy heade.
 What belongeth this or that
 vnto thee: doe thou followe me.
 For what matter maketh it,
 what

The Imitation of Christ.

What every man doth or speaketh: It is not necessary for thee to pleade the cause of other men: thou must give an account or reckning for thy selfe. Why then doest thou entangle thy self wyth other mens matters: I know all men, & see all things, whatsoever are done under the sunne: and know how it goeth with every man, what he thinketh, what he would haue, and wherevnto his counsell & meaning doth tende. Therefore, all things are to be committed vnto me: doe thou practise and enioy thy peace, and suffer the vnquiet to mople about what he lyst, that shall surely give account of all their doings & sayings. For they can not deceiue me. Let neither the shadow of a great man, nor yet the familiarity of many nor the priuate friendship of men be passed vpon of thee. For these things doe cause distractions of minde, and compassse the same about with vncomly darcknesse. Truly I would willingly vtter my sayings vnto thee, and woulde disclose my secrets, if thou wouldest diligently watch for my comming, and wouldest open the doore of thy soule vnto me.

In what things stedfast peace of mind and true profiting doth consist.

The xxix. Chapter.

Sonne,

The minde
must be
drawen
from mens
friendship,
that vnto
God it may
be most in-
ward.



Sinne, I haue thus spoken: My
 peace I leau vnto you, my peace
 I giue you: not as the world gi-
 ueth, doe I giue vnto you. All
 men couet for peace: but al men
 be not carefull about those things which are
 requisite vnto true peace. My peace hath to
 doe with the modest, and with men of a softe
 and gentle spirite: Thy peace doth consist in
 great pacience, and thou mayest enioye the
 same at large, if thou wilt heare me, and wilt
 follow my voyce. Wherefore giue good heede
 in all thyngs, what thou doest or speakest, and
 be occupied in this one point, to please me, &
 to couet or desire nothing out of mee. Thou
 mayest iudge nothyng rashlye and wythout
 cause, concerning the sayings or doyngs of
 other men, nor entangle thy selfe in matters
 not committed vnto thee. By this means, it
 shall happen that thou shalt be both little and
 seldome disquieted. For to seele no maner of
 trouble at all, nor to haue anye veracion of
 minde or bodie, is not for this present life, but
 for the state of the everlastyng rest. Wherefore
 thinke not that thou hast founde true peace, if
 thou seele no griefe at all: or that all is well,
 if thou suffer no maner of aduersite: or that
 all is perfite, if euey thing happen as thou
 wouldst

Curiosity
 is full of
 trouble,

The Imitation of Christ.

wouldest haue it thy self: noz thinke that thou art any thing of price, or highlie in my fauor, if thou liue in great godlinesse & swætenesse. Neither shall the true Louer of vertue be known by these things, noz yet doth the coming forwarde and perfection of a man consist in these things. In what point then? Forsooth, in offering thy selfe with thy whole hart vnto the will of God, and in louing thy self in no maner of thing great or small, neyther in this life, noz in the life to come: so that thou keepe still in prosperitie & aduersitie one countenance continually with thanks giuing, in waying all things with bypyghtnesse and indifferencie. Finally, if thou wilt shew thy self so ballaunt and of so strong faith, that though the inward comfort be withdrauen, thou wilt yet prepare thy Soule to endure greater things, & wilt not report and praysle thy selfe for iust and holy, it wil then fall out, that thou mayest tread the true and right way of peace, and that thou mayest haue vndoubted hope to see my countenance againe with ioyfull singing and melodie. Now, if thou shalt come vnto the full and persite contempt of thy selfe, wæte thou, that thou shalt be able to enioy so much peace, as can be possiblpe had in thys mortall life.

Of the excellencie of a free minde:& likewise
that humble prayer is better thā reading.

The xxx. Chapter.



His truely is the woꝝk of a per-
fite man, Loꝝd, neuer to release
the minde from the handling &
occupping of the Scriptures, &
heauenly thinges, & in the mid-

*The per-
fection and
libertie of
man.*

des of many cares, to passe ouer the life, as
it were without care, not after the maner of
the dull and sluggish person, but in the excel-
lency of a free minde, cleauing to no woꝝldly
thing with inoꝝdinate desire. I beseeche thee,
O my most merciful god, preserue & kepe me
fro the cares of this life, least I be ouermuch
intwapped with the necessittes of the body, oꝝ
least I be caught with the pleasures of those
thinges which doe hurt the soule, oꝝ least I be
discouraged as one that is hartbroken wꝝth
griefs & sorowes. I meane not of those thinges,
which the lightnesse of the woꝝlde doth couet
with tooth and nagle: but of those myseries,
which do griene my mind with the common
penall infelicity of our moꝝtalitie, & doth hin-
der it, that it can not enter into the libertie of
the spirite, as often as it listeth. O my God,
my vnspeakable swaetenesse, turne al carnal
comfort

The Imitation of Christ.

comfort into bitternesse, which draweth mee
away from the lone of things everlasting, and
allureth with the beholding of, I cannot tell
what present & delightfull goodnesse. Let not
flesh and bloud overcome me: Let not flesh &
blond overcome me, O my God: let not the
wo:ld and the short glozy thereof deceine me,
let not the deuill giue me a sal with his subtil-
ty and craft. Graunt me strength to resist, pa-
cience to suffer, cōstancy to perseuer. Graunt
me in the steade of all wo:ldly comforts, the
most pleasant annointing of thy spirite: and
in steade of carnall lone, poure into mee the
lone thy name. Wery me ate, and drinke, and
clothing, & the other necessaryes to the main-
tenance of our body are burdensome to a ser-
uent spirite. Cause that I may vse such non-
rishments temperately, and that I be not en-
tangled with the ouer grædie desire of the
same. In dede I may not cast away al things
bicause nature must be sustained. Againe, thy
holy lawe forbiddeth to couet all superfluous
and most delightfull things. For else the flesh
would wære p:owde against the spirite. Be-
twene these two thinges, let thy hande rule
me I beseech thee, and teach me, that nothing
be done ouer much.

Measure
is a moste
beautifull
vertue,

That

That men are most of all hindred from the
comming of the highest felicity thro-
row the loue of themselues.

The xxxi. Chapter.

LORDE.



Sinne, thou must purchase the
whole with the whole, and not
keepe backe anye thing of thy
selfe. For to gine thee vnder-
standing of this, thy selfeloue
doth moze hurt thee, than any thing else what-
soeuer it be: and it happeneth that according
to that loue and desire which thou hast, every
thing doth moze or lesse stick vnto thee. Now,
if thou shalt be endued with a pure, simple, &
temperate loue, thou shalt be void of the bon-
dage of thinges. Desire not that which thou
maiest not haue. Possesse not that which may
entangle thee, and which may depriue thee of
the libertie of the minde. It is a wonder that
thou doest not utterly comit thy self vnto me
with thy whole heart, with all these thinges
which thou canst wish for, or haue. Why art
thou consumed with vayne mourning and
pensiuenesse: why art thou tired with super-
fluous cares: shew thy self obedient vnto my
pleasure, & thou shalt suffer no maner of losse

The Imitation of Christ.

or hindrance. For if to get thy selfe commodities, and to haue thy wishes, thou wilt apply thy minde to the seeking of things and wilt couet to change the place wherin thou art, thou shalt neuer attaine quietnesse, nor be free from carefullnesse. For in euery thing there shall be somewhat to find lacke off, and in euery place there shall be one or other to be thy aduersary. Therefore, euery thing doth helpe, when it is not gotten or plentifullye encreased, but rather contemned & cut out of the minde by the routes: which thing I woulde haue to be vnderstande, not onely of landes and riches, but also of the ambition of honour and desire of vaine praise: All which doe peryshe with the worlde. Besides the place doth little fence a man, if seruient spirite be wanting: Neither doth that peace which is outwardelye sought for, long continue, if it lacke the true foundation of the settled mind: That is, except thou shalt stande in me, thou shalt chaunge but the place and not the minde. For an occasion arising, and being taken, thou shalt find not onely those things which thou dost flee from, but also moe things too besides.

¶ Prayers to attaine to cleannesse of minde, & the heauenly wisdom.

The. xxxij. Chapter.

SERVANT.

No man is
made bet-
ter with-
out God,
without
whom dis-
quietnesse
of mynde
doth al-
waies in-
crease.

SERVANT.



Confirme me, O God, with the
 gift of thy holy spirite: graunt
 me so great vertue and polwer,
 that the Inwarde man beyng
 strengthened, I may ride my
 selfe from all vnproffable care, and tangour
 of feebleneste, and that I be not drowne with
 the sundry desires of any thing, whether it be
 vyle or precious: but doe account both my self
 and all other things so: transitorye & corrup-
 tible, forasmuch as nothing is continuallye
 permanent vader the sunne: Nay, all things
 are but vaine & torments of the minde. Who
 so taketh these things in such sort, it is he that
 hath lost aboue other: Graunt me, O Godde,
 heauenly wisdom, that I may learne to seeke
 & finde thee aboue all things, to knowe and loue
 thee aboue al things, & so to take other things
 according to the order of thy wisdom, as they
 be in deede in themselves. Graunt me both
 wisely to decline from flatterers, & patiently
 to beare mine aduersaries. For neither to be
 moued with euery blast of wordes, nor yet to
 giue an eare vnto the flattering flatterer:
 that in deede is perfitte wisdom, and so shal
 we safely go forward the way we haue once
 begunne.

alid of the
 anning out
 to him to
 ad of this
 to exhorta

Highest or
 chiefest
 wisdom.

P. 1.

Against.

The Imitation of Christ. | T
Against stylle speakers.

The xxxij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Sure, if any shall haue an euill
opinion of thee, or shall speake
euill of thee, doe not thou take
the same grieuously; but rather
thinke worse of thine owne self
than he noth, and beleue no man to be more
weake than thy self. If thou wilt go the secret
way of vertue of the mind, y^e shalt not great-
ly esteeme flying words. It is no small wys-
dome to keepe silence in aduersitye, and to
turne thy mynde vnto me, and nothing to be
troubled wyth the iudgement of the worlde.
Peace must not stay vpon the saying of men,
wyth whome whether thou be well or yll re-
ported, thou art not for that cause another
man. In mee, in mee I saye, true glozy and
true peace both consist: & the same shall enioy
it plentifully, that neither coueteth to please
men, nor yet feareth to displease them. All
vniquietnesse of mynde, and distracting of the
senses, doth surely procede from inordinate
loue and bayne feare.

How God must be called vpon, and praysed
in aduersities.

The xxxiij. Chapter.

SERVANT.

The fickle
iudgments
of men are
little to be
accounted of

The Imitation of Christ.

time as the tempest being ended, more ioyful
seasons doe follow on. Howbeit thy almighty
hande is able to remoue and turne from me
this temptation also, and to mitigate the vi-
olence therof, that I doe not wholly faint and
giue ouer, according as thou hast manie times
belt with me befoze tyme. O my God, ac-
cording to thy mercy towarde me. And with
the more harde aduenture that I am oppres-
sed, so much the more sweetely shall I be re-
fresched with the help of thy mighty right hand.

Of crawing of Gods helpe, and confidence
to recouer grace.

The xxxv. Chapter.

LORDE,



onne, I am the Lorde, the
strengthener of men in aduer-
sities, vnto whome thou maiest
repaire & resort, if at any time
it go otherwisse than well wpth
thee. But that most of all doth hinder heauen-
ly comfort, that thou somewhat slowly doest
betake thy selfe to prayers. For befoze that
thou pray vnto me earnestly, thou seekest af-
ter many comforts al the while, and doest re-
fresh thy selfe with outward things: & there-
fore it hapneth, that all doe but little profite
thee,

e 121

VI 24

thee, till that thou espie me to be the same that
 doe deliuer those men out of troubles, which
 haue put their trust in me, out of whom, there
 is no helpe neither substantiall, no: counsell
 profitable, no: remedy durable. But now ta-
 king courage vnto thee againe after the tem-
 pest, be whole & strong in the light of my mer-
 cy. For I am at hand (saith the Lord) to restore
 all thinges, not onely to as good case as they
 were at the first, but also to renue them plen-
 tifully with the better. Is there any thing o-
 uer harde for me to doe? Or am I like vnto
 them, which do not performe thei: promises?
 Where is thy faith, so stande stedfastly & with
 perseuerance, shew thy selfe a man patient &
 valiant. Comfort will be with thee in his due
 time: And when after, looke after me, I say: I will
 come & I will cure thee. It is temptation that
 both bere thee, and vaine carefullnesse which
 doth make thee asfraid: What good doth care
 of the chaunces to come, but that thou mayest
 heape sorrowe vpon sorrow: The euill of the
 day present is sufficient for it selfe: vaine and
 unprofitable it is, either to be troubled or to
 reioyce about thinges to come: which perchaunce
 shall neuer happen. But it is mans fashion to
 be deluded with such imaginations, and it is
 the token as yet of a bale courage, so soone to

The Imitation of Christ.

we must
stande sted=
fastlye a=
gainst the
temptacions
of the deuil
wyth a
strong faith
in God.

be dꝛotoned with the intisment of the enemy.
Hee soꝛceth nothing at al whether hee delude
and deceiue with true things oꝛ false things;
& whether he giue a man a soile with the loue
of pꝛesent things, oꝛ with the feare of things
to come. Wherefoꝛe, be not troubled in thy
minde, oꝛ faint harted: beleue me, & put thy
frust and affiance in my mercy. I am many
times harde by thee, when thou thinkest that
I am a great way off: & when thou supposest
that thou hast lost altogether, euen then many
times is greater gaine so much the moꝛe
neere at hand. All things are not therfoꝛe lost
though the matter fall quite contrary to thy
desire. Thou oughtest not to iudge of the feelde
of pꝛesent miseries, noꝛ when calamitie both
arise from some place, so to be moued & nyp=
ped in the heade withall, as though al hope of
escape were taken away. Doe not think thy
selfe altogether forsaken, if at any time I ey=
ther haue sent thee calamitie foꝛ a season, oꝛ
yet haue withhoꝛd a lone my desired comfort fro
thee. Foꝛ thus doe men go on to the kingdom
of heauen: & surely, this is moꝛe foꝛ thy pꝛofit,
& foꝛ the pꝛofite of al other of my seruants: that
ye should be excited and quickned with aduer=
sities, than if all things should happen vnto
you according to your hearts desire: I am so
well

well acquainted with the secret thoughts of
 the heart, that I know it to make very much
 for thy saluation, that sometime thou be left in
 heavinesse, least perhaps, being provide with
 prosperous successe, & shouldest therby thinke
 thy selfe that which thou art not. I am able to
 take away that which I have given : & I can
 restore the same againe when me listeth. If I
 have given it, it is mine owne. If I have ta-
 ken it away, I have not taken away thine se-
 ing every good & perfecte gift is my gift. Ther-
 fore, if at any time I sende thee some evil and
 abuseritie, grutch not therat, nor dispaire : e-
 ven I the same am able to ease thee quickly,
 & to turne all thy heavinesse into ioy. But in
 that I deale so with thee, I am iust, and much
 to be commended. And if thou be wise, and do
 rightly confidee this my deede, thou shalt ne-
 ver with such saintnesse be soze for aduer-
 ties, but rather reioyce, and give me thanks.
 For thou shalt iudge that this above al othe-
 ringes is to be reioyced at, that I afflicting
 thee with sorowes, doe nothing at all spare
 thee. As the father loved me even so love I
 you, sayde I to my most deare Disciples,
 whom I sent not I tell thee, to perishing and
 transitory ioyes, but to great sights: Not un-
 to honours, but unto infamie & slander: Not

God the
 highest phi-
 sition sen-
 derth no
 kinde of
 troubles,
 but such as
 bringeth
 saluation.

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The Imitation of Christ.

unto solennesse, but unto laboz: Not unto rest,
but to bring forth plentiful fruit in patience.

Remember these my words, & my good forme.

Of despising of all things in the worlde, that
the Creator may be founde.

The xxxvi. Chapter.

SERVANT.

All (crea-
tures) must
be repoun-
ced, to the
ende that
wee maye
possesse the
Creator.



By worde, I haue yet neede of
thy far greater fauour, to come
vnto that point, that neither a-
nye man, nor yet any creature
may be a let vnto me. For so
long as any thing doth withhold me and keepe
me backe, I can not see freely vnto the. He
desired to take his flight freely, which sayde:
Woulde God I had wings like a Dove, to flye
away into rest. What is more quiet then a
simple eie? What is more free then he,
which desireth nothing vpon earth. There-
fore, man must passe over all the creatures,
and bring himselfe to such a lowdeale or for-
wardnesse, that being rowled basing him-
selfe, he may see that thou the Creator art nor
thing at all like to any of the creatures. And
vntlesse a man be deliuered from all the crea-
tures, he can not freely applye himselfe vnto
heauenly things. For fewe addicted vnto the

con-

contemplation of Godlynesse, are therefore to be founde, because few know how to separte themselves wholly from vaine and worldly things: wherevnto no doubt we haue great neede of Gods fauor, to lift vp our minde, and to raiſe vs beside our selues. But vnlesse we be lifted vp in spirite: and deliuered from all worldly things, be wholly ioyned vnto God, it is a matter of no great importance, whatsoeuer eyther he knoweth or he hath. He shall be long time a vntyme or vnderling, and shall lye vpon the grounde, that both greatly esteeme any thing besides the one, Almighty, euerglasting godnes. Whatsoeuer thing is not good, the same is nothing at all, & to be reckned as nothing. There is, no doubt, great difference betwene the wisdom of a man lightned from above and Godly, and the knowledge of the learned and skilfull person: and the doctrine which floweth from above, and from the heavenly fountaine, is much more noble then that which is painefully sought for by mans wit. In deede there are many that are desirous to contemplate heavenly things: but such as doe not studie to practise the things that are necessary thereto. What is also a great let, that men doe stay in signes & sensible things: and small labor is bestowed vpon the perfitte mortifi-

The Wise-
dome of a
man light-
ned from a-
bove is bet-
ter then the
knowledge
of a learned
and skilfull
Clarke.

John 6: 45
I have said
unto you

The Imitation of Christ.

God perfecteth not by
on external
& sensible
things, but
by upon the
mortification
of the
soule.

The spiri-
tually man
is chiefly
busied a-
bout spiri-
tual things.

Man's
judgement
is blinde.

mortification of a mans selfe. I knowe not
what the matter should be, & with what spirit
we are led, and what is in our minds that are
called spirituall, in that we apply our selues
with al studie and care to corruptible and vile
things, & yet doe seldome or neuer thinke vpon
the businesse of our soule by gathering all our
wits about vs: And how is this to, that after
a small calling of our selues in, we forthwith
burst out againe, and do not with straight ex-
amination way our woꝝks: We doe not at-
tend or take heed wherein our affections are
occupied, neither doe we lament that all our
things are so impure. For the manners of all
men are corrupted which in olde tyme was
the cause of so great a flood. Therefore, when
the affection is corrupted within, it is of neces-
sity that the action also that doth follow, being
the descryer of the lacke of vigour and force,
should be corrupted. For the fruit of good life
doth proceede out of a pure soule. Inquiry is
made how much every man doth: but with
howe great vertue he doth them; it is not so
studiously wayed. For arch is made whether
one be rich, whether one be strong, whether
one be faire and beautifull, whether he be va-
liant, a good writer, or a singer, or a plotmaker
but most men say nothing of this: how poore
be

he is in spirit, how patient & gentle, how good
& inward. The nature of the world doth be-
hold the outward things: but grace doth turn
it selfe vnto the inwarde things. The first is
many times deceyued this other hath a hope
& trust in God, that it may not be deceyued.

Of the deniall of a mans selfe, and the put-
ting of all desire from him.

The xxxviij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne, thou mayest not attaine
vnto libertie perfectly, vnlesse
thou doe wholly renounce and
forsake thy selfe. All covetous
men, and louers of themselves;
men full of desires, curious, wandring & un-
constant, evermore desirous of pleasure, & not
of Iesus Christ; and manye times attempt-
ing thinges that shall not stande or continue,
are but captiues, because al that is not of god,
is but vanishing, and shall perishe. Here this
hort & perfitte sentence: Forsake al thinges, and
thou shalt finde all thinges: Forsake thy desire,
& thou shalt finde rest. Resolue & p̄m̄it this
in thy minde: and after thou halt fulfilled all
thinges, thou shalt vnderstand the meaning.
SERVANT. Lord, this is not one daies work,

The Imitation of Christ

The per-
fection of a
christian
man.

or play of children, but therein is briefly com-
prehended y^e whole perfection of a godly man.
L O D R E, Somme, thou oughtest not to be tur-
ned away forthwith, or to discourage thy self
when thou hearest this woarde Perfection: but
rather be prouoked to higher things, & at the
least wise to sigh after the with desire. Would
to God thy case were such, & thou were come
so farre, that thou were not a lover of thy self,
but diddest wholly obey my will and pleasure.
Thus should it come to passe, that thou shouldest
highly like me, and shouldest passe ouer
thy whole lyfe with ioy and peace. Thou hast
yet many things to be forsake, which, vntlesse
thou shalt utterly yeld vp vnto me, thou shalt
not attaine vnto that which thou requirdest. I
reade & aduise thee to buy gold of me that gloweth
with the fire, that thou mayest become
rich: to weete, heavenly wisdom, treading
downe all base and vile things. Cast awaye
earthly wisdom, that is: cease to please and
flatter thy self after the fashion of the worlde.
I haue sayde that thou must buye most vyle
things with precious things, and such as are
highly esteemed in the worlde. For that true
heavenly wisdom, which doth not much chal-
lenge vnto it selfe, nor coveteth to be greatly
made off in the worlde, seemeth but vyle and
course,

course, and in a maner forgotten: which undoubtedly many men praising in their mouth doe yet farre dissent in their life: for all that, the same wisdom is that precious pearle, which to many men is hidde and unknowne.

Of the instabilitie of mans minde, and setting God before himselfe aboute all things.

The xxxviij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Sonne, do not credite that affection wherein thou now art, because it shal by and by be chaunged into another affection. For so long as thou liuest, thou shalt be subiect to mutabilitie & chaunge, whether thou wilt or no, so as thou art sometimes glad and sometimes sad, sometimes quieted, sometimes troubled, sometimes godly, sometimes contrary, sometimes diligent and painefull, sometimes slowe and dull, sometime graue, sometime light. But this wise man I spake off, and one rightly scholed in spirite, doth stande above these changeable things, not considering what he thinketh in him selfe, or which way the wind of instabilitie doth blow, but bending the whole purpose of his mind to that ende that he ought to doe, that is to saie,

to

The pure
intent of
minde doth
cause con-
stancie.

The Imitation of Christ.

to the very best ende. For so it hapneth that the same man maye abide vnshaken, while the simple eye of his meaning is directed vnto me without intermission or ceassing, through so many, so diuers & sundry euentes. And the more pure that the eye of y intent is, so much the more vnconstantly doe men walke in the midst of diuers strormes. But that eye is blind in many men, & doth quickly looke vpon some pleasure lying before it: so that it is seldome seene that he is wholly free from the stayne or spot of self loue. Thus did the Jewes come in old time to Bethany, vnto Martha & Mary, not for Iesus sake onely, but to see Lazarus. Therefore, the eye of the intent must be clenfed, that it may be simple & straight, and to be directed vnto me beyond the reach of all things which doe happen among, in great varietie.

That there is pleasure about all things, and in all things to one that loueth God.

The xxxix. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Hold my God, and al things:
What would I haue more: or
what can I wish more happy:
O sauourie and swete worde:
But to him that loneth y word,
and

and not the worlde, nor the things that are in worlde. My God, and all things: to a wise man it is ynough: and to repeate the same oftentimes, is pleasant vnto thy louer. For whilst thou art present, all things are pleasant: whilst thou art away, all things are painefull & troublesome: Thou makest a calme soule, & great peace and pleasant ioye. Thou art the cause that we haue a good opinyon of all thynges, and that thou be praysed in all thynges. Neyther canne anye thing long please without thee: Saye, that any thing shoulde be acceptable and sauozie, the presence of thy fauour is requisite and the same must be saued and powored with thy wisdom. What is not sauozie and swete vnto hym, vnto whome thou art sauozie? Againe, what canne cause pleasure vnto him, vnto whome thou art not sauozie? But the wise of the worlde doe faile in thy wisdom, and such as saue the flesh: because death is found here and there very much vanitie. But they which followe thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortifying of the fleshe, are to be thought wise in deede, because they are translated from vanitie, to veritie, from flesh, to spirite. Vnto these men God is swete and sauozie: and whatsoener there is in the worlde

God is all
things in
all men.

There is
very great
difference
betwene
Creator &
his creatu-
res, be-
twene the
giuer and
his gifts.

wo: be created, al that doe they referre to the
praise of the Creator and maker. Yet is the
taste of the Creator and the creature of euer:
lastingnesse, and of time, and light vncreated;
and light illuminated vnlike, yea, and that far
vnlike to. O euermlasting light, and thou which
doest surpasse al created lights, shine clærely
vpon mee: and with thy brightnesse pierce,
purge, chære, giue light vnto all the inwards
of my minde, quicken my spirite with thy po-
wers, that I maye sticke fast vnto thee with
the song of triumphant gladnesse. O Lorde,
when shall that blessed & desired howze come,
wherewith thou mayst fyll me so with thy pre-
sence, that thou maist be al things in al things
vnto me. Surely, so long as this shall not bee
graunted vnto me, I shall not haue full and
perfite ioy. The olde man, not yet wholly cru-
rified, not yet wholly mortified, both as yet
liue within me, which maketh me so: yet
doth it mightily couet against the spirite, yet
doth it moue warre within me, & suffreth not
the kingdome of my soule to be quiet. Vnto go
to, doe thou helpe me which bearest rule ouer
the Sea, and dost settle the motions of the
waues & surges. Disperse the people that are
desirous of warre, and tread them downe by
thy force and vertue: Shew forth thy great-
nesse,

nesse, & make noble this right hande of thyne.
 For I haue no hope any where, I haue no re-
 fuge any where, sauing in thee, O my lord god.

That this life is neuer in safety frō temptacion.

The xl. Chapter.

LORDE.



Donne, thou shalt neuer bee
 without dangers in this lyfe,
 but so long as thou liuest, thou
 shalt alwaies haue neede of spi-
 rituall weapons. Thou art in
 the midst of thy enemies: Thou art assaulted
 on the right and left hande. Therfore, vnlesse
 thou wilt defende thy selfe with the buckler of
 wisdoome on all sides, thou wilt not long time
 be without a wound. Againe, vnlesse thou wilt
 fire thy mind vpon me, to suffer all things for
 my sake with a sincere wil, thou shalt be vna-
 ble to continue this heat, or to attaine the re-
 warde of the blessed. Wherefore, thou must
 ouergo all things like a man, and must vse a
 mightie hand against the things that are cast
 against thee. For Manna is giuen to the con-
 querour: but much miserie is left vnto the
 sluggard. Now, if thou seeke after ease in this
 life, how wilt thou come vnto the life enerlas-
 ting? Bend thy self wholly, not vnto rest, but

Constant
 pacience is
 that that
 getteth vic-
 torie.

D. J.

vnto

The Imitation of Christ.

vnto patience. Seeke for true peace, not vpon the earth, but in heauen: not in men and other worldly things, but in god alone. Thou oughtest to enterpryse all things willingly for the loue of God, labors, sorowes, temptacions, vcerations, carckes, necessities, infirmities, wronges, obloquies, reproches, opprestions, reproches, corrections, despisinges: These things do allure vnto vertues: These things doe make tryall of the yonge Souldiour of Christ: These things doe make a heauenly Crowne: to this man will I praye for bys short labor an everlasting rewarde: for a reproche pass, everlasting glozy. Thinkest thou that thou shalt alwayes haue spirituall comforts as thou wouldest thy selfe: The state & condition of those my saints was not such in olde time, but they did patiently abide many greuous things, & sundry temptacions, and great destructions: wherein neuerthelesse, they did wholly shewe themselves patient, althogether more trusting vnto god, then to themselves knowing that the aduersitie of this life shall not counteruaile their glozy to come. Wylt thou haue that at the first chop, which manye haue gotten scarcely at the length, after many teares, & trauals: looke for the lord & shewe thy selfe a man, & giue not ouer thine enterpryse

The louer of god doth beare and sucke vnto most harde things.

The state of the true saints was most troublesome & tedious.

pryse for lacke of faith, but bestowe both body and soule constantly in the defense of Gods glory. I will reward thee most bountifully, & will be assistant vnto thee in all calamity.

Against the vaine iudgements of men.

The xli. Chapter.



Sane, cast thy mind constantly vpon God, & feare not mans iudgemente, so long as thyne owne conscience doth pronounce thee godly and innocent. It is profitable and blessed to suffer these thinges, neither is the same grieuous and painefull to a modest mind, & to one more trusting in God then himselfe. Many men doe prate & babble many things, and therefore little credit must be giuen vnto them: and it is not possible that al men shoulde be satisfied. And though Paule did study to please all men, and did shew himselfe all things to all men, yet did he little reken to be counted so by mans iudgement. He did what he coulde no doubt to the profite & saluation of others: but he coulde not let himselfe to be condemned & despised by other mens iudgements, & did therfore commit the whole matter vnto God, who knew all, and defended himselfe with patience and modestye a-

The cleanness of a mans conscience, doth passe all mens iudgements.

The invincible patience of the minde fixed vpon God.

D.ij.

gainst

The Imitation of Christ.

gainst the flanders and cursed speakings of
the wicked, & the lawlesse liers. Neuerthelesse
he answered sometime, least he shoulde cause
offence to the weaklings, through his silence,
Why shouldest thou then at the length feare
to be cōdemned of a mortall man, who to day
is alive, & to morow is no where? Feare God

He that lo-
keth vpon
God doth
restrain fro
altercation
of words.

God is the
deliuerer
& rewarder
of the that
suffer ad-
uersitie pa-
ciently.

and thou shalt not feare men. What hurt can
any man doe with his words or wrongs? He
hurteth himself rather than thee, and cannot
escape the iudgement of God, whosoever hee
be. Haue thou God before thine eyes, & strue
not with quareling words. If thou think thou
be oppressed presently with infamy vnderse-
ued, take not the same heauilye, or diminishe
thy crowne with impacience, but rather looke
vp vnto me in heauen, which am able to deli-
uer man from all rebuke and wrong, and re-
warde euery man according to his doings.

Of the pure and entire yeelding vp of himselfe to the
attaining of the libertie of minde.

The .xliij. Chapter.

L O R D E.



Come, forsake thy selfe, and
thou shalt finde me. See that
thou challenge nothing vn-
to thy selfe, see thou haue no-
thing peculiere and proper
vnto thy selfe, and so shalt
thou

thou be alwayes a gainer. For ouer and a-
boue this, thou shalt haue greater giftes gi-
uen thee, as soone as thou shalt yelde vp thy
selfe, neuer to looke backe againe.

SERVANT. Lorde how oftentimes shall I
yelde vp my selfe, and wherein shall I for-
sake my selfe?

LORDE. Alwayes, and at all howes, both
in smal and great matters. I except nothing,
but that I wil haue thee founde naked & made
bare in all things. Else how couldest thou bee
mine, and I thine, butesse thou were spoyled
of all thine owne will, both within & without?
The more speedily thou shalt thus do, so much
the better shall it go with thee: and the fullier
and more sincerely that thou go about it, both
so much the more shalt thou please me, & the
more shalt thou gaine by it. Some in dede do
yelde vp themselves vnto me: but yet they
doe it with some exception. For they doe not
put their trust in me fully and wholly, & there-
fore endevor to see & provide for themselves:
Other also at the first doe yelde themselves
altogether: but after wards when temptacion
once knocketh, they come to their olde condi-
cions againe, and therefore doe very litle pro-
fite in vertue. These men shall never aspyre
vnto the true libertie of a pure hart, & to the

We are
made par-
takers of
God by re-
nouncynge
of our own
will.

No man
but one re-
nouncing
himselfe,
and made
bare of all
thinges, &
brought
vnto no-
thing, can
please God
and accord
firmely
with him.

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most pleasant benefite of my familiaritie, vn-
lesse an entire yeelding vp, and a daily offering
and sacrificing of themselves haue gone be-
foze, without the which it happeneth not, nor
will be that thou mayest enioy the consumatio
of God. I haue sayde many times vnto the;
and nowe I say againe: Forsake & yeelde vp
thy selfe; and thou shalt enioy deepe peace of
minde. Crie all for all, require nothing, aske
nothing againe, abide in me merely & with-
out sticking at it, and so shalt thou haue me, &
shalt be free of minde, and boyd of darknesse.
Endeuor this, praye for this, labor to wish for
this, that being wholly turned out of thy selfe,
thou maiest being naked, followe Iesus naked,
and mortified vnto thy selfe, liue vnto me for
euer more. Then, both vaine imaginations,
and wicked troubles, and superfluous cares
depart awaye. Then also shall immoderate
feare be gone, and loue inordinate die.

Of conuenient dealing in outward things, and
flying vnto God in daungers.

The xliij. Chapter



Onne, thou must looke vnto
this diligentely, that in euery
place and outward action and
businessse thou haue a free mind,
and maister ouer it self, and do
put

put all things vnder thy subiection, & not thy
 self vnder them, and be not the slaue or bond-
 man of thine owne deedes, but a Lord, but a
 Ruler, but one truely set at libertie, & an he- The sum
of christian
libertie.
 brye, translated into the lot and libertie of the
 children of God, who despising present things
 doe beholde things everlasting, and loke vp-
 on mortal things with the left eye, but things
 heauenly with the right eye: whome tempo-
 rall things doe not draw to cleave vnto them;
 but they themselues doe rather draw them to
 serue their tourne aright, according as they
 were made of God and the chiefeest workman,
 who did leaue no disordred thing in thinges of
 his creation. Now, if in enery chaunce thou
 shalt not cleave vnto the outwarde shewe of
 the matter, nor behold the thing seene or hard
 within a carnall eye, but in enery thing shalt
 forthwith enter with Moyses into the taberna- All oute-
ward thin-
ges doe de-
ceiue. With
out the in-
ward coun-
sell of God
wee must
determine
nothing.
 cle to aske counsell of the Lorde, thou shalt
 sometime heare God make thee an answer,
 and shalt returne as one taught in manye
 things, both present and to come. For Moyses
 did alwaies repaire to the tabernacle in assai-
 ling of doubts and questions, and he fled vnto
 the helpe of prayer to dye away the perils, &
 wickednesse of men. Euen so oughtest thou to
 flee into the secret place of thy hart, in calling
 D. liij. earnestly

The Imitation of Christ.

earnestly vpon Gods help. For it is recorded in the scriptures that Iosua & the other Israelites were therefore deceyued of the Gabao-nytes, because they did not first aske counsell of the Lord, but were deluded with the sweetnesse of wordes, as men light of credite, vnder the shewe or pretence of godlinesse.

That man be not importunate in his businesse.

The .xliij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Done, commyt thy cause vnto me alwaies: I wyll frame the same aright. Loke for my decrees and determination, & thou shalt seele a profiting thereby.

The whol felicitie of man doth depend vpon the obedience of Gods wil.

SERVANT. Lorde, I commit euery thing vnto thee with a good wil, because my thought doth little pzenaile about it. And woulde to God I were not carefull thus for the chaunces to come, but did submit my selfe without stay vnto thy will and pleasure.

LORDE. Sonne, man oftentimes desirous of some thing, doth couet the same: and then hauing once gotten it, hee beginneth to be of another mynde, because the desires of one thing are not dureable, but force you to diuers and sundrie things. Therefore it is not the

the least thing of all to forsake himselfe in the least things: and the true profiting of a man consisteth in the denying of himself, so that he that hath done that once, the same is most free and in most safety. But that olde enemy, aduersarie to all good men, doth neuer cease from temptation, but day and night worketh high treasons or decrytes, if perchaunce he maye thereby throwe downe the vnwarie headlong into þe snare of guile. Wherefore, watch & pray, saith the Lord, lest you enter into temptation.

Renouncing of a mans selfe in all things is the safest liberation.

The deuill doth not cease to tempt.

That man hath no goodnesse of himselfe, nor that he can boast of any thing.

The .xlv. Chapter.

SERVANT



Ord, what is man that thou art mindefull of him? What is the sonne of man that thou carest for him? What hath he deserved to be had in fauor of thee? Lord

Psal. 8.

Rom. 11.

what can I complain of, if thou shalt forsake me? Or wherein can I iustly blame thee if thou graunt me for my requestes? Surely, this may I rightly thinke and say to my self: Lord, I am nothing, I haue no goodnesse of my self, but being voyd of all things, doe ever tende vnto nothing. And if I be not holpen of thee,

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God doth
help wit:
out al help
of man.

thee, and instructed of thee wythin my minde,
I am made altogether warme and dissolute.
But thou, O Lorde, art alwayes one, and
doest abide one for euer more, alway good, iust,
holy bicause thou doest all things well, iustly,
holply, and order them with wisdom. But
I being more prone to reuolting then com-
ming forwarde, doe neuer continue still in one
state, bicause I am subiect to the alteratiōs of
time. But when thou doest stretch forth thy
helping hand, I am by & by refreshed, for as
much as thou art able alone to helpe without
help of man, & to strengthen me so much, that
my countenance may not now be chaunged
into diuers things, but my minde may be cor-
rected and repose it selfe in thee onely. There-
fore, if while I either desire the godlynesse of
minde, or am moued vpon some necessity to
seeke for thee (when there is no body to com-
fort me) I could skill to cast al humaine com-
fort fro me, surely I might rightly hope well
of thy fauor, & looke for a new gift of comfort
with ioy and gladnesse. Finally, it is thy be-
nefit whatsoeuer doth happen well vnto me
at any time. I am vaine & a wretched man, of
no regarde in thy sight, vnconstant & weak.
Therefore wherevpon may I boast, or why
shall I desire to be reuerenced? Forsooth I
shall

shall boast but of nothing, and as for that, it is most vane. Ambition is in deede a most pestilent and most vaine thing, which draweth a man away from true glozy, & spoyleth him of heavenly sauoz. For whilst a man standeth in his owne conceit, he displeaeth the: whilst he gapeth after mans praises, he is depriued of true vertues. But true glozy & holy reioyce is to boast of the, and not of himself, & to reioice in thy name, and not for his owne vertue, or to be delighted with any thing sauing onely for thy sake. Therefore, let thy name, and not mine be praised: Let thy work, and not mine be extolled. Let that holy name of thine be so praised, that I may haue no prayse of men at all. Of thee will I boast gladly for euermore. Of my selfe will I boast nothing, sauing of mine owne infirmities. Let the Iewes desire naturall glozy betwene themselves: I will study for that which doth only make for God. Surely, all mans glozy, all mortall honor, all worldly loftinesse, if it be compared with this thy everlasting glozy, is vanitie & folishnesse. O my truth, my mercy, my God, blessed trinitie, to thee only be praise, strength, & power, honour, glozy worlde without ende. Amen.

Ambition
is a most
pernicious
thing to
mans sal-
uation.

Of the contempt of mortall honour.

The. xlvj. Chapter.

LORDE.

The Imitation of Christ.

LORDE,



Onne, thinke it no matter to thee, if thou see others honoured and extolled, and thy selfe to bee despised and contemned. L yfte vp thy minde vnto me into heauen, and so shalt thou not take it grievously to be contemned of men in this worlde.

SERVANT. Lord, we are in blindnesse, & are sone seduced with vanitie. If I looke rightly vpon my selfe, I neuer haue anye wrong done vnto me of any creature: wherby it happeneth that I haue no cause to complaine worthily of thee. But bicause I haue sinned against thee both oftentimes and grievously, the whole worlde vpon good cause is sharply set against me. Therefore is infamy and contempt due vnto me: to thee is prayse, honour and glory belonging. And except I so fashion my self, to be despised and forsaken of all men, and take it quietly to be had in no manner of reputacion at all, I can not either attaine vnto a quiet and stedfast minde, or bee lightened fro aboue, or fully ioyned vnto thee.

Euery creature is armed to the destruction of man.

Whā except he take patiently extreme nakednesse & contempt, he can not be ioyned vnto God.

That a man must not set his peace vpon Men.

The xlvij. Chapter.

LORDE.

L R O D E,



Sonne, if thou shalt fire thy
 peace in any man lyuing, by
 cause of thy agréement and fa-
 miliaritie with him, thou shalt
 be vnstedfast and vnquiet. But
 if thou shalt repaire to the euerlasting im-
 mortal truth, thou shalt not be vexed with the
 departure or deceasse of thy friend. For man
 is so much the nearer vnto God, as he depar-
 teth farther from all earthly comfort: & doth
 ascende so much the more highly vnto God,
 as he descendeth the more dæpely into him-
 self, and as he is the more vile in his own con-
 ceite. But he that doth attribute any good-
 nesse vnto himselfe, the same is a let for gods
 fauor to haue place in him, bicause the fauor
 of the holy ghost doth alwaies seeke for a low-
 ly mind. If thou knowest how to bring thy self
 altogether into nothyng, and to ridde thy self
 from all loue of the creature, surely I should
 flow into thee with great bountiffulness. But
 whilest thou lookest vpon the creatures, the
 sight of the Creator is withdrawn from thee.
 Learne to maister thy self in al things for thy
 Makers sake: so shall it happē that thou maist
 come vnto the knowledge of God. Euen the
 least thing in the woꝛlde, if it be loner and re-
 garded

All things
 do deceiue:
 the onely
 euerlasting
 truth doth
 make men
 euerlast-
 ing.

All the cre-
 atures do
 hinder the
 sight of
 God.

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gareed inordinately, hindreth one from the
chiefest felicity, & doth defile a man with sin.

Against vaine and worldly knowledge.

The .xlvij. Chapter.

LORDE.

The worde
of God is
not a voice
hard with
bodily ears
but spirite
and euer=
lasting po=
wer being
vnderstode
of the soule



Omne, be not moued with the
seare & sharpe sayings of men.
For the kingdome of God doth
not stande in talke, but in ver=
tue and power. Consider my
wordes, which both kindle the soules, and giue
light to the minds, and make remoꝛse of con=
science, & bring true and perfitte comfort. Ne=
uer reade any thing with this intent, to seeme
the better learned or the wiser therfore, but
endenoꝛ to mortifie thy vices and sinnes. For
this shall stande thee in moze steade, than the
knowledge of many harde & subtil questions.
When thou hast reade and knowne manye
thinges, yet at the last thou must come to one
beginning. I am he that teache men know=
ledge, and doe procure moze sharpe vnder=
standing to litle ones, than can be taught of
any mortall man: insomuch that they whom
I speake vnto, doe soone become wise, and do
much profite in the spirite. Wo be to the that
seeke many curious things at men, and passe
litle

kille vpon the way that teacheth to serue me.
 That time shall come when Christ the may-
 ster of maysters, the Lord of Angels shall ap-
 peare, to require accounts of all men, & to ex-
 amine the conscience of all men: when as he
 shall search Hierusalem throughout with ca-
 delight and those things shall become mani-
 fest which haue lyeen hid in darckenesse, the
 filed finenesse of tongues then holding their
 peace. I am he y in one moment doe so raise
 vp the lowly minde, that he may vnderstand
 mo reasons of the everlasting truth, than a-
 nother shall attaine vnto euen with ten yeres
 studie. I teach without noyse of wordes, with-
 out multitude of opinions, without pryde of
 ambition, without fight of Arguments. I am
 he that teacheth to despise worldly things, to
 loath present things, to seeke & sauoe euerla-
 sting things, to sie honoꝝs, to beare offenses,
 to put all hope in me, out of me to desire no-
 thing, & to loue me feruently aboue al things.
 For by louing of mee a certaine man did so
 wholly learne heavenly things, that he could
 speake wonders, and did moze come forware
 in forsaking all thinges, than hee could haue
 done by any subtiltie of studies. But I vtter
 common thinges to some: to some singuler
 thinges: to some againe I appeare pleasantly

The euer-
 lasting
 truth doth
 shine ouer
 the Godly,
 euen in one
 moment
 like vnto y
 Sunne.

Truth
 bringeth
 peace.

The louer
 of God and
 the renow-
 ced of him:
 selfe is
 soundly
 taught.

in

The Imitation of Christ.

God onely in signes and figures: to other, I open my selfe of himselfe, crets with much light. The saying or voyce and by him of Bookes is all one, which instructeth not all selfe, is the teacher of men alike. But I am the teacher of the truth the truth. within, the searcher of minds, the vnderstander of thoughts, the letter forward of deedes, and the giuer of so much to euery man, as I doe thinke right and reasonable.

Of not drawing outward things vnto a man.

The .xlix. Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne, thou must in manye things be ignozant and vnskillfull, and accou: thy selfe but for a dead man vpon the earth, and for hym to whome the whole

The desire worlde is crucified. For many things must be passed by with a deafe care, & those must be pondered and thought vpon, which do belong vnto thy peace. It is more profitable to turne

thy eyes from those things which mislike thee, & to let euery man haue his owne saying, than to followe contentious talking of words. If thou agree well with God, and looke vpon his owne iudgement, thou shalt beare it the better to be overcome in such things.

Let a man call home himselfe fro externall things & he cleaue fast vnto God.

SERVANT: O Lorde to what passe is it come?

come: Beholde a short damage or losse is lamented, men trauell and runne for a little gaine, and scantly are able to come home a gaine at night: but the spirituall losse is quite and cleane forgotten. Men apply themselves to this that profiteth little or nothing at all: & negligently passe ouer that which is most necessarie of all. So greatly both a man wholly wast his time about outward things: & vnlesse he speedily repent, doth willingly welter still in outward things.

The intire man doth willingly rest himself in outward things.

That we must not beleue all men, & that we soone fall and offende in wordes.

The .L. Chapter.



Helpe me O Lorde in this calamitie. For the ayde of men is surely but vaine. How manye tymes haue I not founde faith there, where I thought to haue had it: And againe haue there found it, where I would not haue looked for it. So greatly is that hope in men and vaine, and in thee only, O God is the health of the iust standing. Telle me the thanks, O Lord God, for all things which dee happen vnto vs weakelings & vnstable, & which are soone decayed and chaunged. What is he that can behaue himselfe so

P. J.

wardly

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Euery mā
is in daun=
ger to tēp=
tations.

Ephe. 3.
Collo. 1.
1. Pet. 1.

Lacke of
foresight
doth in=
crease in=
comodities
and so=
rowes.

warily & circumspectly in all things, that the same doth not sometime come into some snare and distresse: But Lorde, he that putteth his trust in thee, and doth study to haue a simple minde, he doth not offende so soone, or if he do fall into any calamity, with how great difficultie and distresse soeuer he be wrapped and entangled, he is either quickly deliuered from it by thee, or else strengthened with comfort, because thou doest not forsake them at the last, which haue their hope in thee. Surely, faithfull friends are rare, such as will bide still by a man in al kind of aduersities: thou, O Lord, only art most faithfull in all things, & there is none like vnto thee. O howe wise was that holy soule which saide: My mind is confirmed, & hath his foundation in Christ. If it went so well with me, worldely feare shoulde not so soone trouble me, nor the darts of words moue me. But who can foresee all things: who can beware of evils that come after? Nowe, if things foreseene, do yet oftentimes hurt one, how much more grievously will things neuer thought on come nere vnto the heart: But why haue I not better looked vnto my selfe, liely wretch: Or why haue I beleued other men so soone: Howbeit, we are men, and that frailty & brittle, though we be iudged & called angels

angels of many. And whome shalt I beleue
 Lord: Whom but thee; which art the selfe
 truth, and neuer deceuest, nor canst be de-
 cepted. For in deede, all men are but liars,
 weak, vnstable, fraille, most of all in words,
 so that it ought not forthwith to be beleued
 rashly whatsoeuer pretendeth a colour & shew
 of truth: wherby it hapneth that thou wisely
 hast premouished to take heede of men; & that
 euery one of a mans household are his enemies
 and that we must not beleue them that saye;
 Here he is, or there he is. I am taught to my
 cost, I praye God I be made the more warpe
 therby, & not the more foolish. Be wary (saith
 one) be wary, and keepe it close to your selfe;
 that I tell you. Afterward, when I helde my
 tong, and thought that the same was counsel,
 he on the other side coulde not keepe silence in
 that which he bade no words to be made off;
 but forthwith betraying both me & himselfe,
 went his wayes. From such counterfaites &
 vnwary persons deliuer me, O Lord, that I
 neuer fall into their hands or commit such fol-
 lies. Minister true and stedfast sayings vnto
 my mouth, and put far from me a wply and
 deceitfull tong. For I ought altogether to be
 ware that I do not the same to another man,
 which I woulde not haue done vnto my selfe.

Thou must
 not beleue
 any man
 rashly, nor
 blab out a-
 ny thyng
 vnadvised-
 ly.

Math. 7.
 Luk. 6.

The chiefe
religion in
wordes,
deedes and
thoughts.

How good & how quiet a thing is it to saye no-
thing of others, and not to beleue all things
without any respect, or readily to speak much
and to vtter or open himselfe but to few, & al-
wayes to seeke for thee that knowest thy minds,
& not to be caried about with blast of wordes,
but to desire that all inwarde and outwarde
things may be done according to thy pleasure
and commaundement: How safe is it to the
keeping still of the fauor of God, to lie world-
ly bzaury, & not to coueth those things which
with their gay shewe are had in admiration:
but rather to folowe those things with all di-
ligence, which doe bring amendement of life,
& zeale of godlinesse: How many hath vertue
known & ouer hastily praised, done hurt vnto:
Again, how many hath so the same done good
to, being kept in silece in this fraile life, which
is said to be nothing but tēptacion & warfare.

Of putting thy trust in God, if thou be assay-
led with the darts of euill tongues.

The. Li. Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne shewe thy selfe constant,
& haue thy hope set in me. For
what are wordes, but wordes?
which flying through the ayre,
doe not hurt a stone, if thou bee
guiltie

guiltie oꝝ sinfull, ſe thou be willing to correct
thy ſelf. If thou be guiltie of no ſin, endeuor to
beare patiently ſlauderous reports foꝝ Gods
ſake, and at the leaſt wiſſe, beare woꝝds ſome
tymes, though thou canſt not yet abyde the
ſharpenelle of ſtrypes. And why doe ſo ſmall
things moue thy minde, & diſquieted it, but
bicauſe thou art as yet carnall, & haſt greater
regarde of men, then thou oughteſt to haue.
Foꝝ bicauſe thou feareſt to be diſpited, thou
wiſt not be reprimed foꝝ thy faultes, & ſeekeſt
foꝝ ſtirting holes of excuſes. But loke ſome
what narrowly vpon thy ſelfe, and thou ſhalt
well perceine that the woꝝlde is yet a lye. In
thee, & a vaine loue to pleaſe men. Foꝝ when
thou refuſeſt to be bored and ſhamed foꝝ thy
faults, thereby it is plaine, that thou neyther
art modeſt truly, noꝝ the woꝝlde truly deade
vnto thee, oꝝ thou to the woꝝlde. But giue eare
to my woꝝds, and thou ſhalt not paſſe vpon
the woꝝdes, euen of ten thouſand men. Doe,
if all thinges were ſpoken againſt thee that
coude be imagined moſt maliciously, what
hurt ſhould they doe thee, if thou wouldeſt let
them be bozne patiently, & wouldeſt not way
them any moze then a ſtraw vnder thy ſete?
Coude they take ſo much as one heare from
thee? But he that is of a baſe courage, & hath

Inuincible
conſtancie
in bearing
ſlaunders
and mali-
cious ſure-
miſes.

The Imitation of Christ.

we must
turne ney-
ther to the
right hand
nor to the
left, cyther
in prospe-
rity or in-
aduersitie,
cyther for
dispayse
or for
praise.

not god before his eyes, that same is some mo-
ued with a faunt, or yf report. But he that put-
teth his trust in me, & dependeth not vpon his
owne iudgement, the same is boyde of world-
ly feare. I am the iudge and knower of al se-
crets: I know after what sort the thing was
done: I know both him that hath done the in-
iury, & him that hath suffered the wrong done
vnto him. This matter hath risen of me, & by
my sufferaynce it hapneth that the mundes of
many men are disclosed & opened. I wil iudge
both the gilty and giltylesse: but first I was
minded to search the both with a secret iudge-
ment: Mans testimonie doth oftentimes de-
ceiue: my iudgement is full of truth, and shal
likewise continue, neuer to be ouerthrowne.
And in dede the same is hid for the most part
and altogether perceined of few: but it neuer
either erreth or can erre, though it seeme na-
thing indifferent or iust vnto folles. Therefore
men must ste vnto me in all iudgement, ney-
ther ought euery man to vse his own fantasie.
As for the iust man, hee is troubled with no
aduersitie of Gods sending, or either passeth
greatly vpo false reports, or gretly reioyceth
for the reasonable excuses of other men in his
owne behalfe. If or he that considereth that I
am he that searcheth the harts & the raynes, &
that

that I iudge not according to þe sight of woꝛldly shew and outwarde apperance. For many times in mine selfes þe thing is found culpable that in the iudgement of men is laudable.

SERVANT. Lord God, a iust iudge, strong, patient, which knowest the frailty & corrupti-
on of men, doe thou become my strength and whole affiance or trust. Neither is my conscience sufficient for me: thou knowest the things unknowne vnto me, and therefore I ought to submit my selfe in al repꝛose, and to take the same patiently and quietly: which thing if I haue not at any time done, forgive me fauorably, & bestow this benefite vpon me againe, that I may henceforth shewe my selfe more patient. For thy singular mercy is more profitable to the attaining of pardon, then is the opinion of mine owne goodnesse to the defense of my secreete and hid conscience. And though I be guiltie to my selfe of no sinne, yet am I not therefore to be quitte, because if thy mercy were set aside, no man liuing shoulde be iudged for righteous in thy sight.

We must
cline aboue
our consci-
ence that
we maye
stande in
the iudge-
ment of
God.

1. Cor. 4.
Psalm 43.

That all greuous things must be suf-
fered patiently for the lyfe
euerlasting.

The. liij. Chapter.

D. iij.

LORDE.

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LORDE.

The crowne of life doth co-
sozt a stout
paciencce
being con-
querresse of
most payn-
full trou-
bles.



Onne, be not eyther brought
low with traualles which thou
hast taken in hand for my sake,
or so greatly discouraged with
aduersities, but that my po-
uirtie may strengthen and comfort thee in all
chaunces, which am apt ynough to restore
large rewards. Thou shalt not labor long in
this life, nor shalt alwaies be vexed with sor-
rowes. Take my leysure a whyle, and thou
shalt see a speedie ende of euils, & the time shall
come when all labor and turmoile shall cease.
It is but trifling and short, what soeuer hath
an end in time. Wherefore go forward as thou
hast begon, labor faithfully in my vineyard: I
will be thy reward. Write, reade, sing, sigh,
hold thy peace, pray, beare out aduersitie like
a man. The life euertlasting is woorthy al these,
pea, and greater sighs. Peace shall come vpon
thee one daye, which is knowne vnto the
Lord: and it shall not then be the day or night
of this time that we liue in, but euertlasting
light, infinit brightnesse, firme peace, safe rest
& ease. When shalt thou not thus say: Would
God I were deliuered from the body of this
death. For yet shalt thou cry thus. Alack poore
soule, that must dwell in this lyfe so long.

Being re-
ceiued into
life euertlas-
ting, wee
maye pos-
sesse ioyes
that last
for euer
and euer.

For both death that be throwne downe head,
 long there, and there shall be health that shall
 neuer die: no anguish, but blessed ioy, swete
 and honest company. ¶ That thou hadst seene
 the perpetual crownes of the saints in heaue,
 and with how great gloze they now also tri-
 umph and reioyce: which being once despised
 of this world, were thought then euen vnwoz-
 thy of their liues. Surely thou wouldest forth-
 with cast thy selfe downe to the ground, and
 haddest lieter euen to obay all men, then to
 beare rule ouer but one man: neither woul-
 dest thou couet the merse daies of this life, but
 rather wouldest reioyce to be pessed with ad-
 uersitee for Gods sake, and wouldest count it
 for very great gaine to be had in no maner of
 regard at al among men. Now, if these things
 did like thee, and were suffered to linke some-
 what deeply into thy minde, thou shouldest
 not dare so much as once to complaine. Nay,
 all painefull thinges must be borne for euert-
 lasting life. I tel you. For either to attaine or
 to leese the kingdom of heauen is a matter of
 great importance. Lift vp thine eyes into hea-
 uen: beholde where all my saints be present
 with me, who suffered sharpe battaile in this
 life. Now they reioyce, now they take comfort,
 now they are safe, now they take their rest, to
 abide

They that
 are saved
 by hope are
 shake with
 no impea-
 cence.

The Imitation of Christ.

abide with me in the kingdome of my father
foz euer.

Of the day of euerlastingnesse, and the angui-
shes or troubles of this life.

The Lij. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Most blessed Mansion of the su-
pernall Citie, O most cleare
day of euerlastingnesse, which
no night doth darken, but the
hyghest truth doth alwayes
spread hir beames vpon: O day, alwaies ioy-
ful, alwaies safe, of state neuer to be changed
to the cōtrary. O would to God that that day
had once shined ouer vs, and all these mortall
thinges were come to an ende. No doubt, the
same doth shine bright vnto the saintes wyth
continuall clærenesse, but yet a farre off, & as
it were in a glasse, bicause they are yet but
trauellers vpon y^e earth. The Citizens of hea-
uen doe knowe how ioyfull those thinges bee.
The banished children of Eue doe sighe: for
that this day of this time, both short & wicked
and full of sorowes and anguishes, is so byt-
ter and so replenished with troubles: in which
man is defiled with so many sins: is entrap-
ped or entangled with so many euils, is bered
with

The state
of life euer
lasting.

Let all
thinges be
vile and of
no reputa-
cion, for the
hope & de-
sire of e-
uerlasting
light.

With so many feares, is occupied with so many
 ny carkes & cares, is diuersly drawen with so
 many curiosities: is intowapped with so many
 vanities, is compassed about with so many
 errors, is woꝛne out with so many laboꝛs, is
 thrust downe with so many temptacions, is
 weakened with so many delicates & dainties:
 is tormented with so great pouerty, oꝛ lacke.
 When shall there be an ende of these so many
 trauailes? When shall I at the length bee
 deliuered from this wretched slavery of sins?
 When shall I be mindefull of thee onely, O
 Loꝛde? When shall I reioyce in thee at the
 full? When shall I (boyde of all let) enioye
 true libertie, without any grieve, eyther of
 mind oꝛ of body? When shall there be sound &
 perfecte peace, peace without trouble, and safe
 peace within and without. Peace substantiall
 on all sides: O good Iesu, when shall I see thee
 face to face? When shall I beholde the glory
 of thy kingdome? When wilt thou be al things
 in all things vnto me? Or when shall I leade
 my life with thee in thy kingdome, which be-
 fore al beginning thou hast prepared to them
 that are beloued of thee? I am left here as one
 succourlesse, & a banished man in the lande of
 mine enemy, where daily warrs & right great
 misfortunes doe raigne risely. Comfort my ba-
 nishment,

All things
 doe afflicte
 vs as ba-
 nished me,
 that God
 onely may
 comfort vs.

The Imitation of Christ.

nishment, mitigate my sorrow, seeing that I
 breathe vnto thee with exceeding great desire
 of mind. For whatsoener of this world is of-
 fered for comfort, the same is to me but a bur-
 den. I am wholly desirous to enioy thee: but I
 can not take holde of thee. I wish to dwell vpon
 on heauenly things: but things temporall &
 my affections not mortified, doe thrust mee
 downe. I am willing to cline aboue al things
 with my minde: but I am compelled to be in
 subiection to my fleshe whether I will or no.
 Thus I wretched man do fight and struggle
 with my self, & am tedious, or pzecksome vnto
 mine owne self, whilest the spirite tendeth vp-
 ward, and the flesh bendeth downward. How
 great stryfe or fight doe I suffer inwardly,
 that whilest with my mind I am occuppyed on
 heauenly things, by and by the troublesome
 multitude of carnal things doth come against
 me, being in prayer: O my God, depart. not
 far from me; no; refuse me not through wrath
 & anger. Dispersse, through the brightnesse of
 thy lyghtning, all the imaginations that are
 ministred mee of the enemie, & disappoint the
 with thine arrowes shot against them. Call
 home my senses vnto thee: make me to forget
 al worldly things, and quickly to cast away &
 contemne the imaginations of vices. Succor
 me,

The conti-
 nual con-
 flict of the
 christian
 man.

me, O euerlasting truth, that no vanity may
 moue my heart. Come vnto me, O heavenly
 sweetenesse, for that thy comming flieth from
 al impuritie. Forgiue me that thing also mer-
 cifully, and graunt me pardon so often as I
 thinke vpon any thing else beside thee in pray-
 ers. For to confesse the truth, I am wont be-
 ry much to be distracted, and many times am
 not there, wherewith my body I doe stand or
 sit, but rather there, vnto which I am caried
 with my thoughts: There (I say) I am, wher
 my thought is: where my thought manye
 times resteth, there is that which I doe loue.
 And y^e which either delighteth me naturally,
 or liketh me by the means of custome, y^e same
 doth sone come vnto my mind. For this cause
 thou, O truth, hast plainly saide: Where thy
 treasure is, there is thy heart also. If I loue,
 Heauen, I ponder heauenly things willingly:
 But if I loue the worlde I reioyce in the be-
 halfe of the worlde's prosperitie, & am sorie for
 the aduersities of the same. If I loue the flesh,
 I imagine fleshly things many times: but if
 I loue the spirite, it delighteth me to thinke
 vppon spirituall thinges. For what thing
 soeuer I doe loue, I doe both speake and
 heare of the same gladlye, and doe carpe the
 Images or representacions of the same
 home

Man is
 distracted
 with dy-
 uers thou-
 ghts while
 he prayeth,
 insomuch
 that very
 few depa-
 rting from
 all the cre-
 atures into
 their cha-
 ter doe fle
 pure and
 cleane vn-
 to God for
 succour.

The Imitation of Christ.

In what things the desire of our selues and founde blessednesse doth stand
home with me in my head. Surely, he is blessed, O Lord, which for thy sake doth let passe all worldly things, doth vse violence or compulsion to his own body, and doth crucifie the desires of the flesh, with the heate of the spirit, to the intent that his conscience beyng quieted, he may offer vnto thee pure or cleane prayers, and may be meete to liue in the company of Angels, all earthly things being excluded both without and within.

Of the desire of life euermlasting, & how great good things are promised to the that fight.

The. Liij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne, seeing thou seest a desire of euermlasting blessednesse to be poured into thee from a bone, & dost couet to depart out of the tabernacle of the bodye, that thou mayest behold my brightnesse without shadow of alteration: Open thy minde, & receiue this holye inspiration of mine most greedily. Giue exceeding great thanks to the almighty goodnesse, which doth deale so liberallye wyth thee, doth come to see thee so mercifully, doth stirre thee vp so vehemently, doth ease or comforte thee so mightily, leaue thou shouldst

shouldest fall downe vnto earthlye thinges
through thine owne waight & pzonesse. For
thou shalt not attaine ther vnto through thine
owne musing or endeuoring, but by the onely
boughsasing of supernall grace and of Gods
countenaunce, to the intent that thou mayest
come forwarde as well in other vertues, as es-
pecially in modesty or lowlinesse, and mayest
prepare thy selfe to the bickerings to come, &
maiest endeuor to cleaue fast vnto me with al
the whole strength of thy soule, and mayest
serue me wpyth an earnest and ardent will.

Sorine, the fire many tymes burneth: but
smoke is alwaies the companio of the flame.
Euen so, some also doe burne wpyth desire of
heauenly thinges, and yet are not free from the
temptacion of carnal affections, and therfore
they do not those thinges altogither for Gods
glozy onely, to the bearing wherof they craue
his helpe so desirously. Such is thy desire ma-
ny times also, whose sinceritie not wpythstan-
ding thou pretendest to bee exceeding great.
Perther is it little & perfitte which is infected
with priuate commoditie. Craue not for that
which is pleasaunt & profitable vnto thee, but
for that which is acceptable & glorious vnto
me. For if thou iudge aright, thou oughtest to
preserre and folow my decre & and laue both
before

Like as
modestye
doth cipe:
cially com-
mende vs
vnto God,
euen so wee
alwaies do
encrease
therin.

They are
not admit-
ted to the
heauenly
kingdome
which are
not berpe,
paye in
spirite and
free from
their affec-
tions.

The Imitation of Christ.

Pacience
(which in
this case is
not void of
comfort)
hath an in-
vincible
hope of the
libertie and
saluation
to come.

before thine owne desire, and also before all things which are desired. I knowe thy desire or lacke; & I haue hearde thy often sighings. Thou wouldest now be in that glorious libertie of the children of God. The everlastyng mansion, & the heauenly countrey that is full of ioye, doth now delite thee: but the howze is not yet come: Nay the time is yet other wyse: to woe, of warre, of labor, & of tryall. Thou wishest to be replenished with the chiefest felicitie: but thou mayst not yet attaine thither. I am he (saith the Lord) whom thou oughtest to alwayte for, till the kingdome of God do come. Thou must be searched yet vpon the earth, and be exercised in many thinges. In deede, comfort shall be graunted thee sometime but full sacietie thereof shall not likewise be graunted. Wherefore shew thy selfe constant & valiant, both in doing, and also in suffering things contrary vnto the flesh. Thou must put vpon thee the newe man, & be changed into another man: and thou must many times doe those things which thou wouldest not do, and let passe those things which thou wouldest do. Other mens attempts shall come forwarde well ynough: but thine shall not so doe. Other mens sayings shall be heard: thine shall be counted for nothing. Other men asking, shall haue:

haue: when thou askest thou shalt go without.
 Other shall be set out greatly with the praise
 of men: Of thee no man shall say any thing at
 all. Other men shall haue offices committed
 vnto thee to gouerne: but thou shalt be thought
 good for nothing. For these causes, thine owne
 flesh shall sometimes teach thee, and shall a-
 bidde great conuictes: But thou shalt haue
 great good thereby, if thou wilt beare it pacy-
 ently & say nothing. With these and such like
 things is the faithfull seruant of the Lorde
 wont to be tried, whether he can deny himself
 and make himself pleyable in all things. And
 scarcely there is any thing in which it is so
 much for thy profit to be mortified as in that
 that thou mayest beholde and patiently suffer
 those things which are contrary to thy will,
 especially whilst things absurde and not pro-
 fitable in thy iudgement are commanded:
 In which, bycause thou darest not resist the
 power of thy Superior, vnto which thou art
 subiect, it hapneth that it seemeth a hard thing
 vnto thee to be at another mans beck, letting
 passe all thine owne will. But consider some,
 what fruite, how great reward in short time
 shall follow these trauailes of thine, and thou
 wilt not be agréened with them, but wilt take
 right great comfort of thy patience. For in

Pacience
 doth strug-
 gle out of
 many tro-
 bles.

And
 I herby
 godly king
 of victorie
 to overcome
 his owne
 will, accord-
 ing to the
 example of
 Christ.

The Imitation of Christ

Heade of this short will of thine, which thou
 hast nowe giuen euery of thine owne accord,
 thou shalt haue thy will for euer in heauen.
 For therethen shalt thinde whatsoeuer thou
 wilt haue, whatsoeuer thou shalt be able to
 wishe for. There shalt thou haue plentie of
 of all good things without any feare of lacking
 them againe. There shalt thy will (together
 with me) neuer desire any outward or priuate
 thing. There shall no man resist thee: no man
 shall complaine of thee: no man shall let thee,
 but all thy wishes shall be had, & shall most
 plentifully fill the desire of thy minde. There
 will I render glory for reproche, boznie paci-
 ently, the clothing of praise for soot ow & hea-
 uincke, a kingly seat for enermore for thine.
 West or basest place in the woꝛlde. Whereof
 the fruite of obedience appeare, the labour of
 repentance reioyce, modest subiectio be crow-
 ned gloriously. Wherefore, submit thy selfe
 nowe modestly to the commaundement of al
 men, and passe not who speaketh or comma-
 neth: but especially endeouour this one thing,
 that whether some superioꝛ of thine, or some
 equal, or also some inferioꝛ shall require ought
 at thy hands, or else shall but giue a token to
 haue thee doe something, thou take all in good
 woꝛth, and studie to doe them with asincere
 will.

The state
 of euery
 thing lyfe is
 quiet and
 persite.

The fruite
 of faith shall
 be rewar-
 ded with
 most ample
 benefites.

God doth
 specially
 raise by &
 extoll men
 modestly, o-
 bedient &
 subiect to
 others.

will. Let diuers men seeke diuers things: Let diuers men glozy in diuers things: & let them be praysed euē of an infinite number of men: reioyce thou but in the contempt of thy self, & in the doing of my commaundement, & in looking vnto my glozy, & wish for that thing above all other, that eyther by life, or by death God may alwayes be honoured in thee.

How a man being pressed downe with euilles, ought to yeelde himselfe vp vnto God.

The .xv. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Give thee immortal thanks, O God my holy Father, for that those things are done which thou wilt haue to be done: & thou wilt haue nothing to be done, but that that is good. Let me thy servant reioyce in thee, not eyther in my selfe, or in any other. For thou onely art true Ioy, O Lord, thou art my hope and crowne, thou art my reioyce & honor: To be short, I haue nothing but that which I haue receyued at thy hand, and that without any manner of desert of mine at all: thine are all those things, that either thou hast giuen or made. I needie soule, and tirmoiled with trauailes from my birth, am fory in my

God is our
pleny, and
sanctuarie
in afflictio.

The mil-
ryes and
calamities
of men.

A. y.

minde,

The Imitation of Christ.

minde, and that so deepe sometime, that
teares doe gush out of mine eyes, and that I
am altogether disquieted for the evils that are
at hande. I long after the ioye of peace, I ear-
nestly craue the peace of thy childezen, which
are fed with the light of thy comfort. If thou
shalt giue peace: if thou shalt poure forth ioy,
I shal haue a minde full of melodie, and singe
thy prayes deuoutlye. But if thou shalt
withd:awe thy selfe, (as thou art wont very
often) I shall not be able to runne the race of
thy commaundementes, but rather falling
downe vpon my knees, will strike my brest,
bicause I am not now in so good case as I
was befoze, when thy candle giuing light vn-
to me from aboue, I was defended wyth the
shadowe of thy wings against the evils that
ranne violently vpon me. O iust father, and
allwayes to be prayesd: the howze is come
wherin I thy seruant shoulde be tried. O Fa-
ther to be loued, right it is that I should suffer
something for thy sake in this howze. O Fa-
ther evermore to be worshipped, the howze is
come, which thou diddest foze see befoze all be-
ginning: that I shoulde so be overcome out-
wardly for a shoyte time, that inwardely I
might alwayes liue with thee, & that I might
be cotemned, pressed downe, sayle befoze men
a little

The car-
nestnesse
of prayer.

No bitter
aduersity
is sent vn-
to vs with

a little while, & be afflicted with euils and sor-
 rows, to the intent I might rise againe with
 thee in the morning of newe light, and might
 be made bright in heauenly things. O holy fa-
 ther, thou hast thus determined, so thou woul-
 dest haue it: & that hath bene done which thou
 hast commaunded to be done. For this bene-
 fite is bestowed by thee vpon thy louer or friend,
 that he should suffer afflictions in this life for
 the loue of thee, so oftentimes as thou shalt
 suffer the same to be done vnto him, and of
 whome thou shalt suffer it to be done, & after
 that sort as thou shalt suffer it to be done. For
 there is neyther any thing done in the worlde
 without thy purpose and prouidence, nor yet
 without a cause. And surely, it is for my pro-
 fite, O Lord, that thou hast thrust me downe,
 to the intent that I may learne thy ordinaun-
 ces, & cast all loftnesse & arrogancie of mind
 from me. It is profitable to me to haue bene
 shamed, that I might aske comfort rather of
 thee, than of men. Againe also, I haue learned
 therby to feare thy vnsearchable iudgement,
 which afflicteth the iust together with the wic-
 ked and vngodly, and yet not without equitie
 and right: I giue thee thanks, which hast no-
 thing spared to sende me aduersities, but hast
 afflicted me with bitter toyments, sorowes,

out the sin-
 gular pro-
 uidence of
 God.

The bound-
 tisfull pro-
 uidence of
 God bear-
 eth rule o-
 uer all
 things.

There is
 exceeding
 great pro-
 fite of af-
 flictions.

D. ly.

anguishes,

The Imitation of Christ.

anguishes, both within and without: wherein to comfort me, there is none found living vnder heauen: but thou onely art he, O my Lord & God, being the heauenly physician of soules, which both woundest and healest, which ledest downe to hel, and againe, bringest a man backe from thence. Thy correction doth chastise me, thy rod doth teach me: Behold most deare father, I doe submit my selfe to the rod of thy correction: Strike at my back and my necke, that I may bow my naturall corruption vnder thy will: Make me a godly & modest scholer, according as thou art wont rightly to do, that I may alwaies be obedient to thee at a beck. I commit my selfe & all that I haue to thy correction, seeing it is better to be corrected here now, than hereafter in an other place. Thou knowest all, and euery thing, and nothing is hid from thee in mans conscience. Thou knowest the things to come before they be done: neither is there any cause also why any man shoulde tell or admonish thee of the things that are done in the world. Thou knowest what is profitable for me to come forward with, & how much aduersities do helpe or preuaile to wype away as it were, the rust of sinnes. Use thy iudgement and pleasure towards me, and despise me not for my wycked life,

In inuocation and prayers, the renouncing of my owne will is necessary.

Selfe will being renounced, we must willingly put our necke vnder the crosse.

life, which is better or more clearly known
to no body. Nay, it is not known at al to any
man, but to thee onely. Graunte me, O Lorde,
to know those things that are to be known,
to loue those things that are to be loued, to
praise those things, that doe most of al please
thee: to take in hand those things which are
precious in thy iudgement, & to dispraise those
things which are vile in thy sight. Suffer not
me to iudge either with the sight of my out-
ward eyes, or to giue sentence by the hearing
of my vnskillful eares: but with true iudgement
to discern both visible and spiritual things;
& aboue al things to search out the pleasure of
thy will euermore. Open senses are manye
times deceiued in iudging of things. The lou-
ers of this world also are deceiued in louing
visible things onely. As a man so much the
better, as he is accounted the greater of men.
The deceitfull, deceiveth the deceitfull: & the
baine, the baine: the blind, the blind: the weak,
the weak, whilst he extollet, or aduanceth
him: and he doth him reprochfull deede, whil-
lest hee baynelye praiseth hym. For loke
how great euery man is in thy iudgement,
so great he is in deede, and no greater, as one
ryghtly sayde,

Discerning
of spirites,
and sincers
iudgement,
must be as-
ked of God

to iudge
it, on
the other
side, the
weak
and the
blind
are not
to be
relied
on

The vanta-
ge of mans
iudgement,
as our
frances
the gyno-
rite.

W. illg.

That

The Imitation of Christ.

That we must rest vpon base or course works,
when we depart from the highest works.

The Ivi. Chapter.

LR ODE



Onne, thou canst not continue
still in the most seruent desire of
vertues; & in the highest degree
of beholding heavenly thyngs,
but that thou must needes for
original corruption, come aboute sometime to
the lower thyngs; & beare also with wearinesse
the burthen of this mortall life; whether thou
wilt or no. So long as thou shalt beare about
a mortall body, thou shalt feele the ycheroni-
nesse and weight of thy body. Therefore thou
must often sigh & sorrowe in thy fleshe for the
burthen of thy flesh; bicause thou art not able
without ceasing for a time to dwell still vpon
spirituall studies and heavenly contemplatiō.
In this case it is expedient for thee to lie vnto
the base and outwarde woorkes; and to re-
create thy selfe in good deedes; and to awayte
with sure confidence and faith, till I come fro
aboue to visite thee, and patiently to beare thy
banishment and drynesse or dulnesse of mynd,
til thou be visited of me againe and deliuered
from all anguishes. For I will make thee to
forget

The Chri-
tian man
whether he
will or
no, doth
come downe
to the infe-
rior bur-
dens and
necessities
of this mor-
tall life.
God hath
his be-
ginninge,
proceedings
& perfecti-
ons.

forget thy labours, and thoroughly to eniope inward rest. I will open vnto thee the field of the Scriptures, that thou mayest begin to run through the way of my commaundements with a ioly cheerefull minde, and mayest say thus: The calamities of this worlde are not to be compared with the glory to come, that shal be giuen vnto vs.

That man ought to thinke himself worthy,
not of comfort, but of stripes.

The. Lviij. Chapter.

SERVANT.



LORD, I am not worthy of comfort, or of any spirituall care of thine: therefore, thou declarest thy self but righteous vnto me, whilst thou forsakest me being helpelesse and voyd of comfort. For though I shoulde poure forth a whole sea of teares, yet shoulde I not be therefore worthy of thy comfort. Nay rather, I am worthy of naught else but stripes & punishments, which haue offended thee so grieuously so many times, & haue done amisse so often in so many things. Therefore, if the matter be wayed accordinglye, I am not worthy of the least comfort that is. And yet thou mercifull & gentle God, which
wilt

The Imitation of Christ.

God both
at length
comfort the
humble by
his mercie
after that
they are
brought to
extremities.

The de-
scription of
true repen-
tance.

Wilt not haue thy workes to perish, to declare
& shewe forth the riches of thy goodnesse to-
wardes the vessels of thy mercy, dost touch
safe to comfort me without any desert of mine,
aboue all mans reach. Neither are thy com-
forts like vnto mens babblings. And what
haue I done, that I shouldst endue me wth
any heavenly comfort: Surely, I remember
that I haue done no good at all, but that I
haue alwayes bene both proue vnto sinne, &
slow to amendement. Which thing is so true
of it selfe, that if I shoulde denie it, thou canst
shew the contrary, & no man is able to stande
in my defense. What haue I deserued by my
sins, but hell & fire euermore: Truly, I
doe vnfeignedly confesse that I am worthy of
all mockerie and contempt, and that it is not
seemely for me to leade my life among thy
godly seruants. Truly, I am hardly perswa-
ded so to doe: but because it is true, I will so
doe, that I my selfe may reprove mine owne
sins, to the intent that I may the sooner ob-
taine thy mercy. And what shall I sinful man,
& one full of all reproche say vnto thee: Sure-
ly, I haue nothing else to say, but this one
thing: I haue sinned, O Lorde, I haue sinned:
haue mercy vpon me: Forgiue me, suffer me a
little while to lament my calamitie, before I
flie

flit into the land that is darke & couered ouer
 with the dryrinesse of death. And what else
 dost thou require of the sinfull & wretched man,
 but straightly to punishe & thrust downe him-
 selfe for his faults? For in the true punishing
 of a mans selfe, & pressing downe of the soule,
 hope of pardon commeth forth, the troubled
 conscience is reconciled to God, the lost fauor
 of God is recovered, man is kept from the
 wrath to come, & God, and the penitent soule
 of man, doe one meete another with a holye
 kisse. I say, the humble sorrow of sinnes, that
 the sinful man hath, is an acceptable sacrifice
 vnto thee, O Lorde, and of farre more swete
 smelling fauor, than is the perfume of Fran-
 kinsence. The same is that swete oyntment
 with the which thou wouldest haue thy holpe
 faete to be enoiled, who neuer despisest the af-
 flicted and the pressed soule of man. This is
 the place of refuge against the wrath of the
 enimie. In this is corrected & rinsed whatse-
 uer is corrupted and defiled any other way.

Sacrifices
 and accep-
 table repen-
 tance vnto
 God are
 spirituall.
 1. Pet. 1.

That Gods fauour hath nothing to doe
 wyth those men whose mindes
 are earthly.

The viij. Chapter

LORDE.

Donne,

The Imitation of Christ.

The fauor
of God by=
cause it is
spirituall &
euerlasting
pea, & pas=
seth al vn=
derstandyng
hath no=
thing min=
gled wpyth
earthlye
comfort.

All transi=
torie thin=
ges must
be diligent=
ly renoun=
ced that
we may see
Gods e=
uerlasting
inheritance.

There is
chiefest af=
fiance in
death to



Sonne, my fauor is more pree=
cious than that it can abide to be
loyned with outwarde thinges.
Therefore whatsoeuer is a let
to the same, thou must cast it a=
way fro thee, if thou desire to be indued there=
withall. Seeke for a place of solitarinesse, lone
to dwell by thy self alone, seeke for no mans
communication, but rather poure forth de=
uout prayes vnto God: that both thy minde
may be stirred vp and quickned, and thy soule
guiltie vnto it self of well dōing. Set nothing
by the whole worlde, and preferre thy studie
applyed to God before all outwarde thinges.
For thou canst not both apply thy selfe vnto
me, & also be delighted with things transitory.
Thou must depart from thy acquaintance &
deare friends, and thy mind must be called a=
way from all worldly comfort. Saint Peter
doth admonishe the Disciples of Christ euen
so to behaue themselves in this worlde as
strangers & traueylers. O how great faith
and trust shall the person that shall ope haue,
whome the desire of no maner of thing doth
keepe still in the worlde. But to haue a mynde
thus secloded from all things, belongeth to a
man that is not sicke: neither doth the sensual
man, knowe the libertie of the inward man.
Surely,

Surely, if he will haue himselfe to be made those that
 spiritual, he must renounce both things farre are deade
 off, & hard by, & must beware of no man moze vnto sinne
 than himselfe. If thou shalt once conquere thy and the
 selfe perfectly, thou shalt the moze easily sub worlde.
 due all other things. For to triumph over a
 mans self, is perfecte victorie. For he that hath It is the
 himselfe subiect vnto himselfe in such sorte, tope to tri-
 that both his appetite is obedient of reason, & umph over
 his reason obedient vnto me in al things, this a mans self.
 man is both the conqueror of himself in deed,
 & also the Lorde of the worlde: to which grice,
 if thou desire to come, thou must begin lyke a
 man: and the hatchet must be put to the roote,
 that thou maiest cut out and plucke vp by the
 roote the secreete & inordinate loue, both of thy
 selfe, and of all pinate and carnall goodnesse.
 For of this mans inordinate loue of himselfe,
 all onely doth depende, whatsoeuer by a man
 must be grubbed vp, which mischief being o
 uercome & subdued, great peace and continu
 all calmenesse shall folow after. But bicause
 we doe endeuor to dye perfectly vnto them
 selues, and to depart out of themselves, fully,
 it hapneth that most of them do abide still en
 wrapped in themselves, & can not be caried vp
 in spirit aboue themselves. But he that des
 reth to be conuersant with me freely, he must
 entereth in
 needes

Self loue,
 the roote of
 al mischief
 muste be
 pulled vpe
 that conti-
 nual peace
 may folow.

No man
 entereth in

The Imitation of Christ.

to familiar-
tye wyth
God, but
het that
doth who-
ly mortisye
himselfe &
renoueth
all creatu-
res.

nées slay and mortisye all his wicked & inor-
dinate affections, and not cleaue desirously to
any creature through p̄uate lone.

Of the diuers motions of Nature & of Grace.

The Lix Chapter.

L O R D E.



Onne, marke diligentlye the
motions of Nature & of Grace.

For they be moued after so
subtle & contrary a maner the
one to the other, that they can

scarcely be discerned but of the spiritual man, &
one altogether lightned within. Al mē in deed
do conet the thing which is good, & do pretend
some good thing in their sayings and deedes, &
therfore are many deceiued with that shew &
countenance of a good thing. Nature is subtille,
& draweth, intrappeth, deceiueth many men,
and alwaies will haue hir selfe to be the pro-
posed ende of hir doings: But Grace behaueth
hir selfe plainely, and declineth from all kind
of euill, vseth no deceit, and doth all thinges
plainely for Gods sake, & resteth in him vnto
the ende. Nature refuseth to die, to be kept vn-
der, to be overcome, to obeye, to be subiect.
Grace studieth to mortisye hir selfe, resisteth
hir appetite, desireth to be subiect and to be o-
uercome,

Nature and
all thinges
that come
best to the
outwarde
aperance
do deceine.

uercome, and will not vse hir owne libertie,
loneth to be kept at commaundement, & desir-
eth not to beare rule ouer any man, but is
ready alwaies to liue, to remaine, to be vnder
God, & to be in subiection with lowlinesse to al
worldey things for Gods sake. Nature studieth
for hir owne commoditie, & considereth what
gaine maye growe vnto hir by another: but
Grace both consider rather, not what is profit-
table & commodious to it self, but what is pro-
fitable vnto many men. Nature is gladly ho-
nored and magnified: but Grace giueth al ho-
nor and glozy vnto God. Nature is asfeard of
reproch & contempt, but Grace reioyseth to be
vseid reprochfully for the name of Christ. Na-
ture loneth pleyesse & ease of body: Grace not
knowing howe to be pble, embraceth labour
willingly. Nature coueteth after curious and
beautifull things, and abhorreth the vyle and
grosse things: Grace is delighted with simple
& base things, despiseth not things mishapen,
nor refuseth to be clad with olde rotten rags.
Nature beholdeth transito:y things, reioyseth
at worldey gaires, is so:y for losse, & is pro-
uoked to impatience with euery reprochfull
word: but Grace hath regard of things euer-
lasting, both not cleane with corruptible
things, is not troubled with losse nor prouo-

Grace is
simple, sin-
cere, and
without
malice.

The praise
and vertue
of Gods
grace.
We must
bitterly re-
nounce na-
ture.

The Imitation of Christ

ked to anger, with words somewhat spyteful
and roughe, bicause shee hath placed hir trea-
sure in heauen, where nothing is corruptible:
Nature is couetous, & more willingly recey-
ueth then giveth, as louing hir priuate com-
moditie: but Grace is bountifull and liberall,
sying hir priuate profite, content wyth fewe
things, iudging it more blessed to giue than
to take. Nature is prone vnto the creatures,
to fleshe, to vanitie, to gaddings about: but
Grace doth allure to God & to vertues, biddeth
the Creatures adue, flyeth the world, hateth
the desires of the flesh, represseth gadding a-
bout, & is ashamed to be seene abroad. Nature
seeketh for outwarde comforts, by the allure-
ments wherof, shee may be quieted: but Grace
seeketh comfort in God alone, & delighteth it
selfe in the chiefest felicitie aboue the reach of
all visibible things. Nature doth all things by
cause of priuate gaine and commoditie, & no-
thing for naught: shee alwayes looketh eyther
for equall or greater recompence or else for
praise and fauor for hir good dedes, & desireth
that hir dedes & gifts be greatly waied & set
by. But Grace seeketh for no worldely thing,
nor requireth any other rewards or recom-
pense for hir selfe, then God alone, nor coue-
teth no things necessary to this life, then so
much

much as is needfull to the attayning of lyfe
euerlasting. Nature reioiceth in the multitude
of friends & kinssfolkes, booseth in nobility and
greatnesse of stock, synpleth vpon the mighty,
flattereth the rich, and doth sooth vpon their say-
inges, that be like vnto hir selfe. But Grace
doth loue euen hir enimies also, and is not
prowde with the multitude of fryendes, nor
hath the place of hir birth, & noblenes of bloud
in admiration & reuerence, vnlesse perhaps
the greater vertue and godlinesse did there
appare. The same doth more fauor the poore
than the riche, doth more lament the case of
the innocent and harmelesse man, than of the
mightie: reioyceth in the behalfe of him that
is true, & not of him that is deceitfull: doth al-
wayes exhort most of all to followe all those
gifts that are best, and to expresse the sonne of
GOD in vertues and good life. Nature doth
quicklie complaine of neede & pouertie. Grace
beareth lacke constantly. Nature referreth al
things to hirselfe, and strueth and contendeth
for hir selfe: but Grace referreth al things vnto
God, from whence she toke hir beginning,
ascribeth no goodnesse vnto hirselfe, is not ar-
rogant, nor confencious, nor preferreth hyr
owne sayings befoze other mens, but submit-
teth hir selfe in all searche of trath vnto Gods

The Imitation of Christ.

tossedome and iudgement. Nature is grædis
 to knowe, and to heare strange miseries and
 and secretes: Shee is a bolster of hir self, & desi-
 rous to make proufe of many things with hir
 senses: desireth to be knowne, and to doe those
 things, by which shee may get prayse and ad-
 miration: But Grace doth not employ to la-
 boꝝ to vnderstand strang and curions things,
 because all that doth procéde and take his be-
 ginning of that auncient corruption of ours,
 wheras in deede no strange thing is durable
 vpon the earth. Therfoꝝe it teacheth a man to
 keepe downe vaine delight, to refraine frõ o-
 ffentacion & bzaging, modestly to hide things
 prayse woꝝthy, & things to be had in admira-
 tion foꝝ their excellencie, & out of every thing
 and knowledge to seeke foꝝ the fruit of profit,
 and the prayse and honoꝝ of God. Shee will
 not haue hir selfe noꝝ hir things to be praised,
 but desireth that thanks shoulde be giuen vn-
 to God foꝝ his gifts, who gineth all things vpon
 méere loue. This Grace is a light set aboue
 Natures reach, and a certaine singuler gift of
 God, and properly the marke of the elect, and
 the pledge of euerlasting life, which lifteth vp
 a man from the loue of earthly things, to the
 loue of heauenly thyngs, & of carnall maketh
 him spiritual. Therfoꝝe the moze sharply that
 Nature

The moze
 Nature is
 mortified,
 so much &
 moze is the
 spirit quic-
 kened and
 made con-
 formable
 vnto God.

Nature is pressed downe & overcome, so much
the greater Grace is poured into it, & so much
the moze is the inward man reformed daily
with new gifts, according to þ ymage of God,

Of the corruption of Nature, & of the power
and strength of Gods Grace,

The IX. Chapter.

SERVANT.



Orde my God, which hast cre-
ated me lyke vnto thy ymage,
graunt me that benefite (which
thou hast declared to bee so ne-
cessary for me, and of so great
force vnto cuerlasting life) that I may over-
come my nature, so corrupt and unisful, that it
draweth me to sinne and to destruction. For
I feele in my flesh the law of sinne, that fight-
eth against the law of my mind, & compelleth
me in many things to obey mine appetite, so
that I cannot withstande his assaults, vnlesse
that thy most holy Grace doe helpe me, beyng
ardently poured into my soule. I say agayne,
I haue neede of thy Grace (& the same great)
that Nature may be overcome, alwaies prone
to euill fro the beginning of my life. For Na-
ture being fallen and corrupted through sinne
by Adams fault, the punishment of this great

R. y.

blc. mish

The Imitation of Christ.

The naturall man doth after a certaine sorte dyscerne outwarde things, being otherwise altogether without indgement.

The description of man that entereth into the new birth and as yet is not wholly newe borne.

blemish hath come ouer al me, so that Nature hirself, which was created good & right by thee is accounted now for the vice & weakenesse of the corrupt nature, because the motion that is left vnto it, doth draw vnto euil & to the inordinate things. For as touching that slender force, which abideth still therein, the same is as it were a certaine sparke, raked vp in the embers. This is that naturall reason compassed about with a blacke darkenesse, so yet neuertheless, that it can as yet discern and iudge good and euill, truth & falshood, although it be not able to performe whatsoeuer it approueth nor enioyeth as now perfit light of truth, nor yet the soundnesse & health of his affections. Hereby it cometh to passe. O my God, that I am delighted with thy law, as touching the inward man, knowing that thy commandments are good, iust, holy, & reprove al euil & sinne, & teach that it shoulde be auoyded. But with my flesh I serue the law of sinne, whillett I obey appetite more than reason. Hereupon it cometh that I haue a will ready inough, but I finde not power & abilitie to make performance. Hereof I determine many times to doe many things well: but because Gods fauour is wanting, which shoulde helpe my weakenesse it hapneth that I leape backe againe,

gaine, & am tired, for a small fighting against my leife. Herevpon it hapneth, that in deede I doe acknowledge the way of perfection, & doe plainly enough see what belongeth to my dutie: but being pressed downe with y^e waight of my corruptioⁿ, I cannot arise vnto the more perfite things. ¶ How necessary is thy grace for me, O Lord, both to make entrance into that which is good, & also to go forward therein, and to bring it to perfection. For neither am I able to do ought without y^e same Grace: & againe, when the same Grace doth confirme and strengthen me, then am I able to doe all things in thee. ¶ The right heavenly Grace, without the which no merits of man, no gifts of Nature are to be had in any price or regard. ¶ Artes are of no force: riches are of no force, beauty and strength is of no force: wit or eloquence is of no force with thee, O Lord, without Grace. For as for Natures gifts, they are comon as well to the good as to the bad: But Grace is a gift peculiar vnto the elect, wyth the which who so are endued, they are accounted worthy of everlasting life. ¶ To be short, it is of so great price, that without it, neither the gift of prophesie, nor the doinge of miracles, nor y^e most hid vnderstanding of secret things are any thing at all to be esteemed. Nay ney

+ The beginning of our salvation standeth vpon the mere grace of God, the going forward and the ende is everlasting lyfe.

* Without grace the greatest & most beautiful things are vile and of no reputation in gods sight.

The Imitation of Christ.

ther faith, noz hope, noz all the other vertues are acceptable vnto thee without loue & grace. O blessed Grace which makest the poore in spirit to be rich in vertues, & makest the lowly & humble minded mā to be wealthy in good things. Come to me, come downe to me: Replenish me earely with thy comfort, least my soule do faile me for very wearinesse of mind & dypnesse. I beseech thee, O Lorde, boughsafe me of thy grace. For the same is sufficient for me, though y other things be not had, which Nature doth desire. I say againe, if the same be assistent to me, I will feare the euill of no temptacion at all, of no calamitie at all. This is my strength, this bryngeth comfayle and health. The same is both mightier then al our enemies, & moze wise then are al wise men in the worlde. Shee is maistres of truth, teacher of discipline, light of the mind, comfort of anguishes, the chaser away of sadnesse, the taker away of feare, the nurse of religion and godlinesse, the mother of teares: Without it, what am I, but a dry sticke, & an vnprofitable and vile blocke: Therefore O Lorde, let thys thy Grace alwayes both go before, & come after, and let that bring to passe that I may alwaies apply my selfe vnto well dowing, though Iesus Christ thy sonne. Amen.

We

We ought to denie our selues, and to followe
Christ by his Crosse.

The Lxi. Chapter.

LORDE.



Sonne, the further off thou shalt
depart from thy self, the nêerer
thou shalt appoche vnto mee.
Lyke as to couet nothyng out-
wardly, is the cause of inward
peace: euen so to forsake himself, inwardly,
doth ioyne a man vnto God, I will haue thee
to learne a perfitte denial of thy self in my wil,
without any gaynesaying & complaint. Fol-
low me, I am the way, the truth and the lyfe.
Without way there is no traueyling: with-
out truth, the way is vnknowne: without lif-
we liue not. I am the way, by which thou must
goe, the truth which thou must beleue, the
life which thou must hope for. I am the ready
way, the truth neuer deceiuing, the life with-
out ende. I am the most straight way, the
highest truth, the true life, the blessed, the in-
created or vnmade. If thou wilt perseuere in
my way, thou shalt knowe the truth, and the
truth shall so deliuer thee, that thou mayst at-
taine euermourning life: If thou wilt get life, or
bay my commaundements. If thou wilt fol-

No man
but he that
wholy re-
nounceth
himselfe is
ioyned vn-
to God.

Christ is
the waye,
the truth,
& the life,
not sodain-
ly and at
once, but
by steps or
grydes.
Iohn. 14.

Ally.

low

The Imitation of Christ.

loſe the truth, beleue in me. If thou wylt be
perſe, ſell all thinges : If thou wilt be my
Diſciple, denie thy ſelfe : If thou wilt attaine
to the bleſſed life, deſpiſe the life preſent : If
thou wilt be exalted in Heauen, thruſt downe
thy ſelfe vpon the earth : If thou wilt raygne
with me, then beare my Crolle with me. For
the ſeruaunts of the Crolle onely doe find the
way of bleſſedneſſe and true lyght.

SERVANT. O Lorde Jeſu Chriſt, foras
much as thy way is narrow, and hatefull to
the worlde, make me with thee to deſpyſe the
worlde. For the ſervant is not greater then
the Lorde, nor the ~~more~~ above his Maſter.
Let thy ſervant be exerciſed in thy way ſee
ing that my ſaving health and true holineſſe
is there to be founde of me. Beſide that what
ſoever I eyther reade or heare, the ſame doth
not fully refreſhe or delight me.

LORDE. Sonne, ſeeing thou both haſt read
& knoweſt al thoſe thinges, thou ſhalt be bleſ
ſed if thou wilt praſe and perſourme them.
Hee that both knoweth & doth my commaun
dements, the ſame loueth me, and I will like
wiſe loue him, & will open my ſelfe vnto him,
and will cauſe that he may ſit wyth me in the
kingdome of my father.

SERVANT. Lorde, bring to paſſe therefore
that

that these thinges maye happen vnto mee, **The an-**
 which thou hast sayde and promysed, I haue **guishes of**
 receyued a Crosse at thy handes: I will pa- **death must**
 ciently beare the same euen to the very death, **be supped**
 accordyng as thou haste entoynd vnto mee. **vp of a mā**
 Surely the lyfe of the Chrystian man is a **in y^e crosse**
 Crosse: but by this waye, men go into Para- **& he must**
 dise. We may not go backe againe, o; leaue **stand sted-**
 off our enterpryse. **fastly to it**
as one in-
vincible.

To it nowe chéerefully Brethren, let vs go
 on togyther. Iesus wyll bē present wyth vs.
 For Iesus sake haue we taken vp this crosse.
 For Iesus sake let vs perseuer and continue
 in the crosse. The same Iesus shall be our hel-
 per, which is both our guide and leader, and
 goeth also befoze vs. Beholde oure Kyng,
 which shall fight for vs, doth goe befoze vs.
 Let vs follow like men: Let no man be stri-
 ken with feare, let vs be readye manfull ye to
 dye in battayle, and let vs not staine our glo-
 rie by running away backe agayne from the
 Crosse.

That man be not ouermuch discouraged,
 if at any time he haue fallen into
 any offense.

The Lxxij. Chapter.

LORDE.

Sonne,

The Imitation of Christ.

Pacience
and humi-
lity or low-
liness of
minde, in
aduersitie
is better
than com-
fort or god-
liness in
prosperity.



so small a thing spoken against thee: which though it were greater, yet oughtest thou not to be moued to impacience. Passe not vpon this thing: it is neyther first nor strang, nor it shal not be last if thou liue longer. Thou art man like inough, so long as no aduersity doth come against thee: yea, thou canst giue good counsel to other, and canst tel how to confirm & cheere them by with thy words: but when sodaine calamitie is at thy doore, then art thou destitute of counsel & strength. Consider how great thy frailtie is, which thou makest pfofe of many times, in smal and trisling matters. Howbeit, both these things, & al other like vnto these, doe make for thy saluation. Cast these things out of thy minde, accor dyng as thou knowest thou must do: But if they nippe thee, endeuor that they either cast thee not downe or do long time keepe thee troubled: and if thou canst not take them ioyfully, at the least wise beare the paciently. But if thou heare such things unwillingly, and doest feele indignation in thy selfe, repress it and keepe in thy selfe, and suffer nothing

nothing once to come one of thy mouth, wher-
by the litle ones should bee offended. By this
meanes shall it be brought to passe, that both
this affection may be forthwith settled, and the
grace of the minde ware sweete, the fauor of
God returning to thee againe: I am yet alieue
(saith the Lord) ready to helpe thee, & to com-
fort thee more then I was wont, if puttyng
thy trust in me, thou wilt cal vpon me deuot-
ly. Be of a more pacient minde, & prepare thy
selfe to greater sufferance. Thou must not
therefore be discouraged, if thou see thy self to
be oftentimes afflicted, and grievously temp-
ted. Thou art a man and not a God: Thou art
flesh, thou art no Angell. Mayest thou be able
alwayes to abyde still in one state of vertue,
when the same hath bene wanting both to y
Angell in heauen, and to the first man in Pa-
radise, as the which did not long remayne in
perfit case: I am he that will both raise vp
the mourners vnto health, & will lift vp vnto
my dignitie those men that doe acknowledge
their owne infirmity.

SERVANT. Lord, I giue thee thankses for
thy sayings, which to me are more sweete than
honye and the hony combe. What could I doe
in so great calamities and angusthes, vnlesse
thou didst strengthen me with this thy holy talke.

So

The de-
scription of
a man en-
tering into
the newe
birth, and
not yet
soundly
new borne.

The Imitation of Christ.

All things that are most painefull and troubleſome, ought to be taken quietly without al-
vexation. So that I may at the laſt come vnto the haue of ſalvation, what matter maketh it what and how great things I do ſuffer: Giue me a good ende: graunt me a happye departure out of this life: be mindefull of me, O my God, and directe or ſettle me in the ſtraight way of thy kingdome. Amen.

Of leauing the deeper things & the hid iudgements of God vnſearched.

The Lxxij. Chapter.

LORDE.



Onne, beware thou doſt not diſpute about highe matters, and the hidde or ſecret iudgements of God: why this man is thus forſaken & left to himſelfe, that other man is increaſed with ſo great fauour: this man ſo much tozmeted, that man ſo highly aduanced. Theſe things do ſurmout mans capacity, neither is any reaſon of diſputacion full ynough to ſearch out the hottome of gods meaning & purpoſe. Therefore, if at any time the enemy do miniſter theſe things vnto thee, or elſe ſome curious perſons aſke thee the queſtion, make anſwere with that ſaying of the Prophet: Thou art iuſt, O Lorde, and thy iudgement is right. And likewiſe that ſaying.

The

The iudgementes of the Lorde are true, and agreeable to equitie. My iudgementes must be feared, and not discusse, as they which doe passe mans vnderstanding & capacity. Desire not so much, as to search or dispute about the merits of the saints and Godly, who shall be more holy or greater then other in the kingdome of heauen. For these things doe manye times cause vnprofitable debates & contentions: doe also mainetaine pride and ambition, whereof aryseth enuynges and dissensions, whilest one stryuethe proudly that an other is holier than the rest. The desire to learne these things, & the searching of them out are fruitlesse: May rather doe displease the godly sort. For I am not God of dissension, but of peace, which peace consisteth in true modesty, and lowlinesse, not in arrogancy and pryde. Some for the affection of loue doe cast more fauour vnto these, then to those: but they do it rather vpon their carnall affection, then that God is so affected. I am he that haue created all the saints, that haue endued the same wth gifts, & haue given them honoz: I know the merites of euery man: I prouoked them with most pleasant gifts and benefits: I knew that they were to be loued, befoze the beginning of the worlde: I did chuse them out of the worlde, & not

The equalitie of the state in the kingdome of God must be left vnto God himselfe, who is all in all.

The Imitation of Christ.

Ioue re-
specteth
not the
person,

Desire
loue.

1 John. 3. 4.

not they me: I called the w my sauoz. I dzew
them to me with my mercy: I led the throug
diuers tempracions, and did poure vpon them
notable comfozt: I gaue them perseuerance
and did crowne their pacience. I knowe both
the first and the last: I embrace all men with
loue incredible. I am to be prayzed in all my
saintes ioyntly, and to be magnified and ho-
nozed in all particularly, aboue all thinges:
which saints being appointed by me to salua-
tion, I haue so gloriouly lifted by without a-
ny of their deserts going befoze. Therfore, he
that despiseth euen the least of my seruaunts,
the same doth neither honoz the great, in as
much as I haue made aswell the small, as the
great: so that he y doth derogate from any on
of y saints, the same doth both derogate fro me
& from al the parteners of the heauenly king-
dome. For they are al but one in the bonde of
loue, thinking all one thing, willing all one
thing, & also loeing al one another w mutuall
loue. Nay rather (which is a much more high
matter) they more loue me than themselves, &
their owne merits. For being rauished aboue
themselves, & dzawne beside the loue of them-
selves, they do go forward altogether vnto the
loue of me, & do repose themselves in the fru-
ition therof, in so much that nothing can turne
them

the from it, or thrust them down, as the which
being full of everlasting truth, doe burne w
the fire of vnquenchable loue. Therfore, let the
carnall & sensuall men leaue of to reaso about
the state of the saints, which knowe not to do
ought else but to loue their priuat ioies. Many
as yet by their naturall affection and worldly
loue, are bent to these or to those: and even as
their iudgement is in y inferior things, so doe
they likewise imagine of the heauenly things.
Without doubt it cannot be vttered in words
in how great vnlikelynesse in those things do
differ the one from y other, which the vnper
fit men do think with themselves, & which the
men that by God are lightned, doe behold as
made open vnto them fro aboue. Therfore,
be ware Sonne, that thou occupie not thy self
somewhat curiously about those things, which
passe the capacite of thy wit: but rather ap
ply thy selfe vnto that, that thou mayest bee
found euen the least in the kingdome of God.
Now, in case a man did know who were ac
counted more holpe or greater than other in
the heauenly kingdome, what should the kno
ledge thereof auaille him, vnlesse he did hum
ble himselfe so much the more vnto me, and
rise by higher vnto the greater prayse of my
name: He doth a much more acceptable thing
vnto

The Imitation of Christ.

So much
as thou
knowest, so
much thou
doest.

The more
high that
God doth
make a mā
so much the
more mo-
dest and the
more neere
vnto God
and the
more belo-
ued is that
man made.

vnto God, which doth thinke vpon the great-
nesse of his finnes and the slenderesse of his
vertues, and how farre of he is from the per-
fection of the saintes, then he which reasoneth
about the greatnesse & lownesse of the saints
and godly. They do not boast of their merits,
which doe ascribē no goodnesse at all vnto
themselves, but acknowledge that all cometh
from me, which they haue, because I haue be-
stowed al those things vpon them, accordyng
to my exceeding great loue of Godlinesse, and
surely they are enuironed wth so great loue
of Godlynesse, and so great ioy of mynd, that
no glo:ry at all, no maner of felicitie is wan-
ting vnto them. The more high in honoz and
glo:ry that all the saints are, so much the more
modest and the mygher, and eke the more
deere the same are vnto mee. And for this
cause that same in the Apocalyps is wyrtten:
That they did cast their Crownes before God,
and with a groueling countenance before the
lambe did worship him, liuing for euermore.
Many dee seeke who is greatest in the king-
dome of God, and cannot tell whe-
ther that they themselves shall bee reckened
in the number of those that are least. It is a
great thing to be the verpe least in Heauen,
whereas all be great: for all shall be called,
and

and shall so be in deede, the childe of God. **God is all**
The least shall growe into a thousande, and **in all, who**
the hundred person that shall be punished of **giueth to**
me, shall dye a yong man. For when the dis- **euery man**
ciples asked who shoulde be greatest in the **his penye**
kingdome of God, they had this same aun- **that labou-**
swere: Vnlesse yee be altered in manners, and **reth in the**
become like vnto the little ones, yee shall not **vinegard.**
enter into the Kingdome of Heauen. Therefore **Math. 20.**
who so shall humble hymselfe lyke to this lit-
tle chylde, he shall be greatest in the Kyng-
dome of heauen. **W**ho be to them that disdain
to submitte themselues wyth the little ones:
for the gate of the Heauenly Kingdome is to
lowe for them to enter in at. **W**ho be to the
ryche also, that haue their comfortes here in
this **W**orlde. For when the poore doe enter
the Kingdome of **G O D**, they shall stande
wythout, crying and howling. Reioyce ye
lowly and meeke. Triumph, ye poore: for the
kingdome of God is yours, in case ye doe o-
bey the truth.

That all hope and trust must be fixed
in God alone.

The. Lxiiij. Chapter.

SERVANT.

S. j.

Lorde,

The Imitation of Christ.



Lorde, in whome is my trust set
in this life, or what is my grea-
test comfort among all things
that are vnder the cope of hea-
uen: Art not thou, O my Lord
GOD, being endued with infinite mercye.
When was I eyther in good case wythout
thee, or in euill plight, whilest thou wast pre-
sent with me: Surely I had lietter to be poore
for thy sake, then to be ryche wythout thee: and
had rather to be a traueyler with thee vpo the
earth, than wythout thee to possesse heauen.
Where thou art, there is heauen: And again,
where thou art not, there is death and Hell.
Thou art my longing and wishe: & therfore
doe I recken it necessarye to sigh, to cry, & to
praye vnto thee. In fine, I can fully put my
trust in no man, to helpe mee in myne ne-
cessities when tyme requyres, but in thee
onely, O my GOD. Thou art my hope:
thou art my trust: thou art my comforter,
and in all things most faithfull. All menne
doe applye themselves vnto their owne af-
fares busily: but thou desirest nothing sa-
uing my saluation and comming forwarde,
and vnto me turnest all vnto good. And wher-
as thou doest thy owe me abzaide vnto sundry
temptacions and aduersities: all that doest
thou

thou appoint out to my commoditie and profite, who art wont to make tryall of thy beloued children after a thousande wayes : in which pꝛoofe and tryall of thine, thou oughtest no lesse to be beloued, than if thou shouldest replenish me with heauenly comfortes. Therefore, O Lorde G D D, I place my whole hope and refuge in thee : in thee doe I settle all my calamities and sorowes. For what soeuer I doe beholde without thee, all that doe I finde to be but weake and vnstable. For neyther frends can doe one good, nor strong men helpe at neede, nor wise giue profitable counsell, nor booke of the learned comforte, nor any abundance of wealth deliuer, nor hid place defend, except thou thy selfe be present, doe helpe, strengthen, comfort, instruct and keepe. For all things that seeme to make to the attaining of peace & felicitie, are nothing at all in thy absence, and in effect doe bypꝛinge no maner felicity. Therefore art thou the ende of all good things, and the toppe of life, the depth of all speech : and to haue a hope in thee aboue al things, is the most sure cōfort of thy seruants. I haue mine eyes cast vpon thee : in thee I trust, O my God, the Father of mercy. Make happy & make holy my soule with heauenly felicitie, that the same maye be-

God being
immutable
and euera-
sting, all
creatures
are subiect
to alterati-
on and
change.

The Imitation of Christ.

come thy holy habitaciōs, and seate of everla-
sting glory, and that no soyle or filth be found
in thy temple to offende the eyes of thy ma-
iestie. According to the greatnesse of thy good-
nesse & multitude of thy mercy, looke thou vp
on me, & giue eare to the prayers of thy needie
seruant, living a great waye off in exile in a
wilde and sauage Countrey. Defende and
p̄ferue the Soule of thy poore seruaunt, in
the middelt of so many daungers of thys
lyfe, and direct me with the guiding of
thy fauour, thzough the waye of
peace, into the countrey
of everlasting
bryghte-
nesse.

(.)

FINIS.

1785

1568

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A short and pre-
tie Treatise tou-
ching the perpe-
tuall Reioyce of the
godly euen in
this lyfe.

Seene and allowed according to the
order appoynted.

Imprinted at Lon-
don by Henry Denham
dwelling in Pater noster
Row, at the signe
of the Starre.

Anno. 1568.

1749
1568
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Hieronymi Wolfij. Car- men ad Lectorem

SI quis ab assidua premitur gravitate laborum.

Commoda letitiae perpetuis unde petat?

Ipsa vetat natura malis gaudere, dolores

Sine sedent animo, corpore siue sedent.

Siue ea dispereunt, per quae traducere vitam

Cogimur, absque quibus mors magis apta foret.

Sed quis in immenso tam felix cernitur orbe,

Quem non fortuna pregrauet acre iugum?

Spes, metus, ira, dolor, luctus, frustratio, culpa,

Innumeris agitant pectora fessa modis.

Vndique tot cingunt horrenda pericula vitam,

Vt locus effugij vix superesse queat.

Hac inter quae letitiae datur ergo facultas?

Materiam potius quisque doloris habet.

Precipue tamen his seges est infauusta querendi,

Non ficta Christum qui pietate colunt.

Sauit in hos semper tenebrarum dira potestas,

Corpora, fortunas, pectora fraude petens.

Quae si fraude minus valeat, iam Martis aperti

Prælia terribili mole cruenta ciet

Armat in hos, quoscunque potest, requiete negata,

Quid mihi letitiae nomina vana refers?

Num paradoxa iuuant, quibus olim Stoica lusi

Secta, Poetarum cen furiosa cohors?

*Dij meliora : sumus veri sine fraude colentes,
Nec sine re nobis nomen inane placet.
Sunt tamen hæc, fateor, crassæ minus obuia blebi,
Quæ defixa gerit lumina semper humi.
Nil nisi quod videant oculi, quod brachia turgent,
Brutaq; precipiant corpora, credit enim.
Sed quibus in cælos mens est erecta, Deumq;
In Christo summum qui posuere bonum :
Hi nos vera loqui sincero pectore, norunt :
Munere letitiæ nam didicere frui.
Quippe graui munit nos experientia teste :
Huic est præcipue semper habenda fides.
Quæ nisi te doceat nostri decreta libelli,
Haud mirer, moueant si mea verba parum.
Sed faciat deus, vt pietatis amore subactus,
Gaudia magnanimus non peritura geras.
Sic quoduis leue fiet onus, dolor omnis abibit,
Semper erit ciuis mens generosa poli.*





ΤΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΥ.

Εὐθυμίας δῶκε
πας ὅσις ἐσὶ σῶφρων.
μόνη γὰρ οἶδεν αὐτὴ
λύπης βάθος δικαίῳ,
εὐδαιμόνας τε ποιεῖ.
ὁ μὲν δὲ ξύμα χρυσοῦ
μὲν δὲ κράτος τυραννῶν
δυναίτο μὲν δὲ κάλλος,
μὲν δὲ ἰσχυρὰν παρὰσχέει
πάντης μόνης παρὰσχέει
ἑλπίμα μὲν δὲ εἶναι.
εὐθυμία γὰρ ἐστὶν
αὐταρκειᾶς ἀμέμπτης
τέκνον, καὶ πατρός ὄλβος,
χόλος, κακῶν τε πάντων.

εὐμοιρίας τ' ἀδελφῇ,
θεῶν μέγιστον ἄλλοις,
χαρὰν λύπης ἁμοιβήν,
φάρμακον τοῖς ἐχέουσιν,
εὐκρινὴν τε ψῆφον,
πεποιοῦσιν τε χρεῖσιν
σωτήρος καὶ ἀπαραίτου.
ἐπεὶ δὲ, τηλικαῦτα
πᾶς δεικνύει διδασκαί
ἔβριον, τί μέλλεις
δρόμον λαβεῖν τὸ δῶρον
ἀγνοῶντων δριμύτων
νηπενθῆς, καπνιστοῦ
χόλος, κακῶν τε πάντων.



¶ Of the Reioyce and glad-
nesse of the Godly, euen
in this lyfe



N as much as mans frayle-
tye lyeth open continually to
so great miseries, paynesfull
labors and calamities: and
seeing that (as one sayeth)
it is left for all men, to passe
ouer so great euiles or troubles in thys mor-
tall life, as there is none but woteth it well
enough: surely we may iustly marueyle what
it shoulde meane, that the holye Apostle of
G D D, blessed Saint Paule, in hys first
Eppistle wrytten to the Thessalonians, byd-
deth vs to reioyce alwayes. For thus, among
other matters, hee sayth: Bee glad alwayes,
pray incessantly, gyue thanks in all thyngs.
And in dede, if a man call to remembrance
that contynnall wretchedynge togyther that
menne haue wpth the Fleshe, the Worlde,
and the Deuyll, if hee looke vppon the hea-
uie tormentes of conscience teuchyng hys
dissolute lyfe past, and the anguyshes, the
cares, the feares of hys mynde: if he consider
the

Of the Reioyce of the

the most greuous feele of Gods wrath, and the inward mournings for sinne: if he thinke of the iudgement daye to come, of the Lords iudgement seat, of the punishment of the godlesse in Hell (to let other things passe beside,) the same person may suppose that the Apostle both in a manner but in bayne exhorte vs alwayes to reioyce and be glad. For what leysure can we haue, to soy among so infinite euils as doe enuiron or compasse vs about, & among so many rough stormes & heauy haps, as betide vs. Neuerthelesse, if we remember that the Apostle giueth charge to the Godlye alone in this place, and to them that cleane fast to him with full affiance, who in so great troubles of this mortall life, and in so many folde chaunces of worldly affayres and tumultes, haue nothing at all but God in whom they can well & willingly repose themselves: then shall it appere, that he did admonishe his Thessalonians of such things, both truly and also necessarily. Touching which poynt, I will bryefly put forth, if it seme good, that shall come now to remembrance, and wil entreate of the continuall ioy of the godly here in this life, in as few wordes as I can deuile.

First and foremost therefore, wee must needes graunt that Paule speaketh not of bulgar

gar oꝝ common ioye, and such as happily the
 Natural man, (as the Apostle doth terme him)
 dreameth off. For this ioy oꝝ gladnesse is not
 of sufficient worthinesse foꝝ the Christian mā.
 And if perhaps there be such, yet is it altoꝝ
 ther common betwene them and the wicked:
 and is neyther durable and continuall, but
 transitoꝝ, and many times interrupted with
 infinite cares and cares, neyther cleare and
 sound, but most commonly impure & defiled.
 Besides this, the Apostle doth much lesse speak
 of that gladnesse which the Couctous world-
 ling hath of his ryches and hoarding vp of
 money: the Ambitious man of honours: the
 Browde and halottie person of his Nobilitie:
 his power and sway, his wealth & puiſſaunce
 the Souldier of his praye and bottie: the vo-
 luptuous man of his swēete delyghtes and
 sensuall pleasures: the Lecher of his lustes:
 the Usurer of his bonds oꝝ billes of debt: the
 Riotour and one plunged in all kind of super-
 stitie and excesse in his delectacions of all
 sortes, in his tables garnished and set forth
 with diuers dishes, his goꝝgiours and verꝝe
 great furniture: the Surfetour in hys gul-
 ling in of Wyne: the Glutton and one borne
 to bellycheare, in gourmandise: the Slug-
 gard oꝝ lazye lubber in ydlenesse and ſlaꝝpe:
 the

Of the Reioyce of the

the Enuious or spitefull repiner in another mans misery: the Tiesse and wrathfull per-
 son in reuenge. These are ioyes in dede, I
 deny not: but they are the lewde ioyes of the
 minde, as a ryght excellent Poet sayth: and
 they are not true but deceptfull, not pure
 and cleare, but mingled with vnpleasantesse
 among: not permanent, but such as last for a
 moment. For I will not meddle now to shew
 that they are the cause of infinite mischieses,
 and most an ende alwayes drawe with them
 as their companions, anguishes of bodie and
 minde, disquietnesse, restlesse businesse, cares,
 heauinesse, mourninges, and doe both excē-
 dingly annoy the body, and also without ende
 pricke the soule, & suffer it not to pause & take
 rest or comfort freely: so farre they are from
 bringing about any maner of way, eyther to
 diminishe heauinesse that by chaunce com-
 meth of other causes, or to rid them quite, and
 dzyue them away: or else to worke, that men
 shall haue no feele and payne at all of the e-
 uils that do betide them. Beside this also, the
 ende of such ioyes is euerlasting damnation.
 For vnto this point belongeth the saying of
 our sauiour in Luke the Euangelist: Wo bee
 to you riche men, which haue your comfort.
 Wo be vnto you that are ful bicause ye shal be
 hungry.

+ The time
 of our life
 compared
 to eternitie
 is not a
 moment:
 quia infini-
 ti & infiniti
 nulla est
 proportio.

hungry. Wo be to you that laugh nowe, because ye shall mourne & weepe. And likewise, which that rich man in the Gospell, determining in hys heart to liue a deintie and happy life henceforth, & being minded nowe to take his ease, to eate, drinke and to be merye, doth heare at the woꝛde and will of God: Thou foole, this night shal they fetch thy soule from thee. To conclude, that example of the Glutton in Luke, clad in purple, doth make to this purpose, who vsing euery day to feede gorgeously, is afterwarde, when he departeth the woꝛlde, toꝛmented in the flames of Hell fire. Therfoꝛe Paule doth not entreat of such ioyes as the welthy, the mighty, the lofty & proude, and such other as lyue daintily in this lyfe, and are wanton, and doe styll, as a man woulde say, keepe it holydaye, as S. James speaketh it, haue. Of what kinde of ioy then speaketh he: Euen of that ioye, no doubt, which of the same Paule is rehearsed by among the frutes of the spirite in the Epistle to the Galathians: and such agayne as that is, wherevnto the Apostle exhorteth the Philippians, when he biddeth them to reioyce in the Loꝛde alwayes: or such likewise as that is whereof Dauid in the Psalmist hath so oftentimes made mention, as when he sayth:
Thou

Of the Reioyce of the

Thou hast giuen ioy in my heart. And, Let all men reioyce that put their hope in thee, let them triumph or reioyce exceedinglye euermore, bicause thou doest defende them. Let all men be glad in thee, which loue thy name, because thou blestest the iust man; O Lord. And likewise, I will be glad and reioyce exceedinglye in thee, I will sing vnto thy name, O thou most high. And; I doe put my confidence and hope in thy mercy, my heart leapeth for ioy in thy sauing health: I will sing vnto the Lorde, who giueth good things vnto me. And moreouer: Reioyce in the Lorde, & triumph ye iust, and glory all yee that be right of heart. And againe: Triumph ye iust in the Lorde, prayse becommeth the right. And furthermore: Reioyce ye iust in the Lorde, and confesse to the memorie of his holynesse. What manner of reioyce this is, in the Lorde, it is a verie harde matter to declare, and a thing that will busie a man to doe it. Howbeit through the helpe of God we will proue what we can say therein. Therefore whosoever being regenerate or boorne a newe in Christ, both put the whole hope and assistance of attaining saluation in the promised mercy of God, onely so: Christ the mediator, and already is fully and wholly perswaded, that God the father is merciefull

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Godly in this lyfe.

full and pacified wyth him, his sinnes being remitted and forgiven for Christ, and with a certaine and sure hope of immortallitie after this life and of truerlasting blesse, doth walke on in his vocation to the ende honestly, helily and godlyly, the selfesame man vndoubtedly resting vpon this same fatherly good wil and and loue of God towarde him for Christ, doth alway reioyce in the Lord, neither can there any thing of so great importance at any time happen among, that can bere that man, and cause him to take thought. So exceeding great is that spirituall ioye or gladnesse of the godly person in the Lord, whether it be in prosperitie, or whether it be in aduersitie. For whatsoeuer it be that hath happened, he in all things perceybeth and acknowldgeth the fatherly minde of God toward him, and no lesse is glad in the Lord in times of heauines, than in prosperous times. For he knoweth wel inough, that what euil so euer there be, the same is sent from God, and that wythout Gods prouidence there hapneth nothing at all. Therefore will he haue his owne will to agree and be conforimable vnto the will of God: and he refuseth not to beare patiently & suffer whatsoeuer it pleaseth God he shall: and he taketh in very good part what so euer hath

who it is
that alway
reioiceth in
the Lord.

Of the Reioyce of the

hath happened. He knoweth that all thynges
 doe turne vnto good, to such as be Godly and
 feare the Lord. He knoweth that those are re-
 proued, corrected, and chastised, whome the
 Lord loueth. He knoweth that euery sonne
 is scourged of the Lord whome he receyueth.
 He knoweth that he is touched with such ver-
 ations, to the ende he shoulde repent & amend,
 that he shoulde make his inuocation & prayer
 vnto God the more seruientlie, that he shoulde
 despise wordly things vtterly, and trauaile to
 the heauenly things with the greater desires
 and sighes. He knoweth that the Godly are
 tried with aduersitie, as gold is with the fire:
 and that the same is giuen of God, as it were
 for a matter to keepe his obedience in exer-
 cise. He knoweth that the affliction that en-
 dureth but a moment, and is but light, doth
 worke in vs a glozy that is everlasting, and
 more heauy than al poise or weight, as the A-
 postle saith: & that the troubles of this present
 worlde are not worthy to be compared with
 that glozy that shall be revealed towarde vs.
 Therefore he reioyceth, even in the midst
 of his calamities and afflictions, he acknow-
 ledgeth the goodnesse of God, being mery and
 chearefull, he giueth the Lord thanks for all
 thynge. Euen thus forsooth Paule, the blessed
 Apostle

Apostle of God reioiceth alwaies in the Lord in so many verations, trauailes, aduersities, so many miseries, so huge euilles, as he patiently beareth for the Gospels sake. Euen vnto this time (sayth he) we are both a hungry & a thirst, and are naked, and are beaten or buffeted with fistes, and doe go vp and down without any certaine dwelling place, & doe labour working with our owne hands: being reuiled, yet we blesse: being euill spoken of, yet wee praye: wee are become as one woulde saye, the excrements of the worlde, being the refuse of all things, euen vnto this daye. **The same** Paule saith: Now I reioyce ouer my afflictions for you, and I supply that which was wanting of Christes afflictions in mine owne fleshe.

The Apostle also in another place doth declare this same toy of his: Blessed (saith he) be God and the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, who is the father of mercies, and God of al comfort, cōforting vs in al our affliction, to the intent that we may cōfort them that are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort wherewith God doth comfort vs, &c. **To this purpose maketh that place:** As it were sorrowing & yet alwayes reioicing: as it were poore, and yet making many rich: as hauing nothing, and yet possessing all thinges: **And againe,** I was
T.j. filled

Of the Reioyce of the

filled with comfort, I am full and abound exceedingly with ioy in al our affliction. The same Paule writing to the Thessalonians, sayth: You also haue become followers of vs, and of the Lorde, receyuing the worde with much affliction, with ioy of the holy ghost, in so much as ye haue beene an example to all the beleeuers in Macedonia & Achaia. **S**ee'st thou here how with þ affliction of the Thessalonians, he knitte'th the spirituall gladnesse of the same. And to this belongeth that which is in the Epistle to the Hebrues: whereas it doth testifie that the beleeuers at Hierusalem did heare tell of the spoyle of their goods with ioy or gladnes, And now how great cherefulnesse, how great gladnesse, how great boasting in the Lord do we take at Pauls wordes: whilst he reckeneth vp his traualles, stripes, prisonments, stonings, shipwackes, watchinges, hunger, thirst, colde, nakednesse, finallie infinite perilles, often deathes. And whiles at the ende he addeth. Wherefore I please my selfe (sayth he) in infirmities, in reprochful words, in necessities, in persecutions, in anxieties for Christ. For when I am weake, then am I strong. Likewise our Saviour Christ himselfe also biddeth them to reioyce and ree'dingly to be gladd, whosoeuer for the Gospels sake, and
for

for the confessing of his name are afflicted. And why so, I praye you: Bicause (sayth hee) your rewarde is plenteous in heauen. Here vpon also Apostles being beaten & (as it is in I. Luke in the Actes) what doe they. They went (quoth he) reioycing fro the sight of the counsaile, for that they were accounted worthy to suffer Contumelie for the name of Iesu. Hence cometh that exceeding great triumph of the Martyrs in their extreme passions and torments, which was not a token of any desperate fiercenesse in the minde, or lacke of seale in the bodie, but of the vertue and power of Christ dwelling wythin them, as Paule speaketh it. Howbeit, some man will saye, it is a sweete thing, and full of comfort to suffer for Christ his sake, so that a man may well haue cause to reioice at such a tyme. But what: Is it possible for any man to reioyce in these calamities and miseries, which doe happen to vs for some other cause: To answer the matter briefly and in few words: The very true christia man in the common & vsual troubles of this life, in sorowe, sickenesse, weakenesse of the bodie, in banishment, neede, pouerty, mourning, losse of child:en, losse of dignitie, in the perils & trauailes of all sortes, mens wronges, infortunate successe in counsailes,

Of the Reioyce of the

losses and detriments of thyngs, if we will iudge thereof aright, doth alwaye reioyce in the Lorde, and that sincerely without doubt, and euen from the very bottome of his heart.

For when he knoweth for certayntie by the doctrine of the Gospell, that God is favourable & well pleased with him for Chykses sake, when he knoweth that his sinnes be forgiven him through Christ, when he knoweth that he is reconciled vnto God, adopted or chosen to be the sonne of God, and that the inheritance of life everlasting is promised him: with this same onely thing he is in such wise delighted, and hereof taketh so much most true pleasantnesse, so much foy and gladnesse, that whatsoeuer calamitie doth happen in this life, it is quickly ouerwhelmed with the exceeding greatnesse of this same foy, and doth scarcely seeme to be any thing at all, in so much that if the worlde being dissolued, might fall vpon him, as a certayne Doct writeth, yet shoulde the weight of it slaye him being no whit afearde therof. For so far it is from the Christen or godly man to feare, to quake or tremble, and abhorre euen death it selfe, or not to reioyce thereat as oft as it comes to remembrance, that rather he wisheth for it with all his hart: which onely he is perswaded not to
be

bee the end of lyfe, but the beginning of euer-
lasting blisse, not continuall destruction, but
a short passage out of this worlde vnto the fa-
ther. Therefore he desireth both to be dissol-
ued with the Apostle, and with Simeon to bee
dimissed in peace. So exceeding great is the
ioy in the heart of the godly man, through the
knowledge of God, and of hys sonne Iesu
Christ. Hath he by some mishap lost his goods
or children? He cryeth with Iob: The Lorde
hath giuen, and the Lorde hath taken awaye:
blessed be the name of the Lorde. Is he kept
vnder with pouertie and neede? He aunsw-
reth himselfe out of the Apostle: Hauing foode
and wherewith to be couered, let vs content
our selues with the same. Is he taunted or ta-
ken vp without his desert? He remembreth
Christ, who being rayled at, did not reply e-
uill for euill agayne, as saint Peter sayeth.
Doth he receyue some grieuous & notorious
iniurie? He remembreth that saying of Paule
to the Romaines. Not reuenging your owne
quarrels, beloued. And agayne: Leauereuenge
vnto mee, and I will requite, sayth the Lorde.
Is he afflicted with intollerable tormentes of
some disease or sicknesse, or with some other
euilles? He cryeth with Dauid: Thou art iust,
O Lord, and thy iudgement is right. Is he for-

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taken of his acquaintance oz friends: He cal-
leth to remembrance that saying out of the
Psalmes. My father and my mother haue for-
saken mee : but yet the Lorde hath receyued
me. Briefly in all troubles, miseries and ca-
lamities, the godly man hath verpe great co-
fortes set befoze him in y^e free goodnesse, mer-
cy and clemencie of God, and from hence al-
way hath vnspeakable ioy, doth aske in pray-
er, loke fo: the mitigation oz asswaging of
them, oz if it shall so please God, full deliue-
raunce from those euils wherewith he is laden
and kept downe. He knoweth that God both
hath commaunded himselfe to be prayed vnto
in the tyme of trouble and calamitie, and that
he hath promysed his aide and helpe, and that
also he looketh fo: a thankfull hart of such as
are deliuered. Trusting vnto these things, he
cryeth with Abacuch : O Lorde in thy wrath
remember thy mercy. And with Hieremye :
Correct vs, O Lorde, but in thy iudgement, &
not in thy furie. And thus in very good hope of
the goodnesse of God, he reioyceth wonder-
fully, and doth not onely betake himselfe vn-
to Gods mercy, but also yeldeth himself vn-
to Gods will, as one ready both to doe, & also
to suffer what soeuer God will haue him.

But as the trust of Gods mercy fo: Chri-
stes

Godly in this lyfe.

ffes sake cannot stand oꝛ ioyne together with
a naughtie and coꝛrupt conscience: so cannot
that ioy neither, wherof the Apostle speaketh,
be at any tyme remayning in a minde guilty
of fault oꝛ sinne. Therfoze wheresoeuer there
is a bent determination oꝛ purpose to com-
mitte sinne, there is there no maner of ioy at
all in the Lorde. And truly is that sayde of
Plaurus the Comiscall Poet: There is (sayeth
he) nothing more wretched and miserable, thā
is an euill conscience. Hereby it is plaine, that
the Apostles admonition oꝛ warning, euer-
moze to reioyce in the Lorde, doth belong on-
ly to the godly soꝛte, which with feare and
trembling doe traunple to their saluatiō. ffoz
these men, bycause they put all their trust in
Gods mercy, & are fully perswaded that God
is fauozable and pleased with them foꝛ Chri-
stes sake, and that not onely their sinnes are
foꝛgiuen and remitted them of the heavenly
father, but that they also are receiued into the
fauour and friendship of God, and that moze
is, into kinned and cōsanguinitie, & are made
the sonnes of God by adoption, the heyres, I
saye of God, and the byetherne and fellowe
heires with Christ: bycause the godlye, I
say, doe stedfastly beleue, they doe alway re-
ioyce in the Lorde, euen in the midst of their

Summum
bonum.
εὐθυμία,
quietnesse,
securitie.
harts ease.

Of the Reioyce of the
troubles and calamities, what euer they be
that chance, eyther common or priuate, spe-
cially seeing they are not ignozant, that God
hath a care ouer them; as Saint Peter doth
witnesse. This reioyce in the Lorde seemeth
to be the chiefest portion of felicitie and hap-
pynesse in this lyfe, & the very chiefe or prin-
cipall goodnesse which the godly sort alone do
enjoy and take fruition of. The heathen Phi-
losophers dreamed vpo an Euthymie or hap-
pinesse of mynde: but touching this ioy of the
godly mindes, they were not able so much as
to suspect or thinke of any such thing. For of
what sort that is, the onely Christians, being
taught by Gods worde, doe know: and those
especially which are ordayned (as Luke saith)
to euerlasting life, & whose names are writ-
ten in the booke of lyfe of the Lambe, which
was slayne from the beginning of the world,
as it is sayd in the Apocalips. For whyle these
doe alway reioyce in the Lorde, they haue e-
uen in this mortall lyfe also a certayne taste,
feeling & smacke of the blessed state that shall
be in the life to come, whereby it happeneth,
that they being ravisht as it were besides
themselues, do seeme in a maner to the world
through ouermuch ioye, to be pientish or me-
lancholike: to wete, whyle they be mute at
the

Godly in this lyfe.

the reprochfull checkes and taunts of other men, doe pray for them that curse them, doe loue and beare good will to their enymies, whyles they doe good to them that hate them, pray for them that hurt and persecute them: to such as strike one side, offer y other: whyles to one taking away the cloake they leaue him their coate also: and giue to euery one that asketh: and lende to one another, hoping for no commoditie therby: whyles many times they refrayne from wine, doe fast, sigh, are sozry, weepe, continue all night in prayer, by lying on the ground, by watch, by studie and by other meanes doe tame their flesh, and doe kepe their body occupied after a seruile sort, as the Apostle sayeth: and who can well rehearse or reckon by all the other tokens of a certayne foolishnesse, as it were, or brayne sicknesse in them: For the worlde can not iudge otherwys of such men, but that they altogether are besides themselves, and out of their right wittes that thus demeane themselves. And surely it cannot be denyed, but that such men they are most commonly, that doe alwaye reioyce in the Lorde. The same doe neither desire riches, nor seeke for honours and promotions, nor follow pleasures. They neglect their owne commodities, they procure

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Of the Reioyce of the

the commodities of other men : being in maner lesse carefull for themselves, than for others. They embrace modestie for stoutnesse: basenesse or ignobilitie for glorie: austeritie of life for dainties. They despise those things that the worlde setteth great store by : and set great store by that which it despiseth, & maketh no accompt off. They in maner giue all that euer they haue to the poore, & that which is giuen to the poore, they thinke it giuen to Christ himselfe. Such are they therfore, that reioyce alway in the Lorde. And in deede, by the iudgement of the worlde, as I haue sayd, they seeme almost foolish, whyles they so doe: but if thou behold the iudgement of God himselfe in his worde, thou shalt finde that they alone are the wyldest of all other men. The thoughts of such men are alway, not on earthly but heavenly things : not vpon temporall things, but on things euermoring : not vpon humaine affaires, but about Gods helthes and commaundements. For out of these doth arise that continuall ioye in the Lorde. Therefore whyle other men are tormented with y cares of this lyfe, they doe sweetely solace themselves with most pleasant thoughts, and thinke themselves present among the companies of angels, farre otherwyle than the worlde thinketh

Codlyc this lifui

keth of them. Their cogitacions are alwayes
bused in the miserie of mans redemption, in
that Lambe which was slayne from the be-
gynning of the world, in y^e forgiveness of sins
reuealed and promised by almighty God for
the deliuerer to come: in that seele of the wo-
man breading downe the head of the serpent,
in the seed of Abraham, which is Christ, as the
apostle saith: in that Prophet, of whom Moses
maketh mention in Deuteron: bytesty, in our
Lord & Sauour Iesu Christ: promised vnto
the fathers, & alreadye giuen vnto vs: that is,
in him onely to whome all the Prophetes doe
beare witnes, that who so euer doth put trust
of his saluatiō in him shal obtain forgiveness
of sins by his name: who came into the world
to saue sinners, to seeke out & saue that which
was lost, to giue his life for the redemption of
many: who was sent to bring the glad & wish-
ed message of Gospel vnto the poore & afflicted:
to heale the contrite of hart, to preach deliue-
rance to the captiue, to comfort them that
mourne, to deliuer the oppressed: who, in fine,
is our aduocate with the father, our enterpre-
tour and pacifier betwene God and men, the
throne of grace, the high bishop & the greatest
priest to make intercession continually for vs:
y^e propitiacion for the sinnes of the world: our
hope,

Of the Reioyce of the

hope, lyfe, righteousnesse, sanctification and redemption. The cōsideration of these things abandoneth heavynesse out of the mindes of the Godly, and maketh them to reioyce at all tymes moze than one woulde beleue. And now howe great gladnesse doe they at large enioy, whiles they set befoze theyr eyes the holy Catholyke, apostolyke, right beleuing, true Christian Church or cōgregation: whiles they remember that communion or fellowship of saints, which being even from the very beginning of the worlde after the promise given touching the Messias or Saviour to come, doth continue on still even to this daye: spreade first abroad in the fathers and Prophetes, afterwards in the Apostles and Martyrs, then by and by divers degrees & orders of Christians, professing all one faith, displayed throughout the whole worlde. Whyles they waye and consider that Christ the sonne of God, our Lorde and Redemer, doth rule this same spouse or congregation of his with his worde and Gospell, doth helpe it with the holy Ghost, & defende and maintaine it continually against the Devil: whiles they pleasantly and sweetely remember, that they are adopyned vnto this fellowship of the Godly & true Christian congregation by sayth, wyll, meaning,

Godly in this life.

meaning, inuocation, prayer, and by confessi-
on: which hath the sonne of God for heade &
principall, Angels for defenders, the holye
Ghost for a sanctifier, the godly and chosen of
all ages for companions: I say, whiles they
remember that they are the members of the
people of God and mysticall bodye; whose
chiefe captaine is Christ: Whiles they occu-
pie their heades about thinking vpon that
most blessed familiarity in time to come, with
all the Saintes in the kingdome of Heauen,
vnto the which they trauaile and labour with
and nayle with exceeding great desire: Ther-
fore howe great ioye thinkest thou that they
haue large fruition of, whiles they are fired
vpon these and such other cogitations: And
surely it behoued Christians alwayes to oc-
cupie their mindes about such things, and be-
ing as it were assonied with the considerati-
on of them, to braile out into the prayles of God
into Psalmes and Hymmes, into spirituall
songs, singing and making melodie in theyr
hartes vnto the Lord, giuing thanks alwayes
for all things vnto God & father, in the name
of our Lord Iesus Christ, as the Apostle tea-
reth. And because the Godly doe this conty-
nually, what wonder is it if they alwaye re-
ioyce in the Lord: And what then is there
that

Of the Reioyce of che
that can euer make heauy and sad; can trouble,
or saare one that in such wise reioycethe
Is it the breach of the lawe? But the Apo-
stle doth comfort vs: Christ (sayth he) hath he
redeemed vs from the curse of the lawe, be-
comming himselfe a curse for vs. Is it sinne?
But S. Iohn doth comfort vs: If anye man
haue sinned, we haue an Aduocate, wyth the
Father, Iesus Christ the righteous, and he is the
propitiacion for our sinnes. Is it death? The
Godly wote full well that it is the gate of life
euerlasting, & a certaine passage out to thys
worlde vnto the Father. Is it the wrath and
the iudgement of God? But we are recency-
led vnto God throughe Christ, as Paule sayth.
Is it Satan? Christ hath conquered him al-
ready; and hath triumphed ouer him being
conquered, as sayth the same Paule: Is it hell
fire, and the tormentos of hell? Nay, Christ
when he had overcome hell, dyd open a waye
vnto Heauen to the Godly. And in the Pro-
phet Osea the Lorde sayth: I wil be thy death,
O death, I wil be thy destruction, O hell. Like-
wise Dauid also in his Psalmes doth testifie,
that Christ did leade Captiuitie captiue, when
he ascended into heauen: that is as much to
say, did as a man woulde saye, leade the eny-
mies of mankinde prisoners in hye thewe of
Triumph:

Godly in this life.

Triumph : the deuill, I meane, sinne; death; hell. Besides in all terrours and temptacions of Sathan, in all heauinesse, in the most sorrowfull cogitations many tymes of death, of the last iudgement, of the iudgement seate of the Lorde, among the other comfortes of the holy Ghost, the godly doe chiefly stay themselves with the wordes of y^e Apostles Creede: I beleue (say they) the Communion or fellowship of Saints, the remission of sinnes, the resurrection of this flesh, and the life euerlasting. They leaning vpon this sayth, chasing all feare and heauinesse from them, lest that the deuill doe minister any, doe reioyce alwayes in the Lorde. Howbeit, some man will here object, that considering they are men, it can not be otherwyse chosen but that they should be troubled with passions, mourne and be sorrowfull oftentimes. For they can not lay the nature of mankinde from them, & renounce as it were the feele of flesh and bloude, which all men haue in them. I graunt that the godly are distressed with heauinesse many a time and oft, and that their minds, are sometimes troubled and mazed: and that it can not be otherwise in these tumults of worldly affaires: Howbeit, the same doe shortly with come to themselves againe, and disquietnesse of mind
being

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being settled or appeased, they so facion themselves in Gods regard and prouident care toward them, that with ioy they take all things very quietly and reioyce in their afflictions, & repoling themselves in thappoyued loue of God towarde them, doe conceyue such gladnesse and pleasure in their minds therof, that the same sorow of theirs is soone ouerwhelmed withall, if happily these outwarde things (as commonly it comes to passe) haue caused any in them. For like as a very little sparkle falling into a great riuer, is forthwith quenched and come to nothing: euen so, whatsoeuer euill there is, falling into the huge and vnmeasurable sea, as it were, of ioyes, wth which the Godly doe flow and are alway replenished, all that is by and by quenched, and vanissheth to naught. For there is neuer any place left open for heauinesse there, where Christ the fountaine of true gladnesse is. To make short, howsoeuer the worlde goeth with them, the godly doe alway either simply and without stop reioyce in the Lorde, or else doe take things to hart, but for a tyme, for other mens sakes, or in fine: if they conceyue anye sorowe in their mind, for God and his glory, which it greaueth them to see defaced, yet they forthwith feele al that same to be exchaunged
for

Godly in this lyfe.

for incredible gladnesse, and to be taken a-
way cleane with spiritual comfort. And here-
vnto maketh that saying of Paule to the Co-
rinthians: I wrote to you (quoth he) this same
thing, least if I had come vnto you, I shoulde
take sorow by those things, of which it beho-
ued mee to take pleasure, hauing this trust to-
ward you all, that my ioy is all your ioyes. For
I haue written vnto you out of much afflictio
and anguish of hart, by many teares, not that
you should be cast into heauinesse, but that ye
might know the loue which I haue somewhat
abundantly towarde you. **And agayne:** Whē
we were come into Macedonia, our fleshe had
no reliefe, but we were afflicted in all thinges.
Outwardly we had fights or contentions, in-
wardly terroures: Howbeit the God that com-
forteth the humble, hath comforted vs by the
comming of Titus. &c. **The same** Paule
writeth also to the Philippians, touching his
sorow: And surely he was weake (sayth he) so
that he was at deaths doore: But God tooke
pittie vpon him, and not on him onelye, but
also on mee, least I shoulde haue one sorowe
vpon an other. Therefore haue I sent him the
more deligently, that when ye sawe him, yee
might agayne reioyce, & I might be the more
voyd of sorow. **And to the Thessalonians like**

U. s. wyse:

Of the Reioyce of the

wyse: Therefore haue we receyued comfort, bretherne, by you, in each of our afflictions & necessities, thorow your fayth, bycause we do now liue, if you stande in the Lord. For what thankesgiuing can we repayre vnto God for you, in all our ioy which we reioyce for you, in the sight of our God, praying both day and night incessantly, that we may see your face, & may supply those things which are lacking vnto your faith. **Here hast thou now, howe the goodly are wont both to be sorry oftentimes and yet for all that, to reioyce in the Lorde. Such is that saying of Paule also vnto the Romaines: I say the truth in Christ, I lye not, mine owne conscience bearing mee witnesse withall, by the holy ghost, that I haue exceeding great sorow, and continuall torment in mine heart. For I my selfe woulde wish to become an excommunicated or cursed thing from Christ for my brethren, my kinssfolke, as pertaining to the flesh. This in dede is the sorrow of loue towarde our neyghbour or brother: and may stand very well together with the reioyce of fayth towarde God, so that he which thus mourneth, doth neuerthelesse alwayes reioyce in the Lord, euen touching the ciuill or outward forme and conuersation of lyfe also. For the goodly, by the Apostles saying,**

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Godly in this lyfe. 110

ing, doe liue alway without carke and care,
 & rest still content with their state or calling :
 take in god worth thinges present, doe not
 greatly torment themselves with the lacke of
 thinges to come, doe reioyce and cheere by
 their owne soule in their owne seruasse, as
 sayeth the preacher: doe take their meate
 with thankesgiuing, doe vse or occuppe such
 commodities as they haue at hande, for their
 necessitie, and that reuerently as the gifts of
 God: being ioyfull, doe leade an honest and
 quiet life, neuer carefull for the morrow with
 thought and pensiuenesse, because Christ tea-
 cheth that euery dayes affliction is sufficient
 for it selfe: doe not wilfully worke their owne
 sorow or harme, or procure themselves vera-
 tions and troubles: doe not relect and refuse
 such goods as God hath giuen them: doe not
 creepe into some solitarie corner, to liue the
 more at their ease and quiet. Neuerthelesse,
 the same doe take the troubles that God hath
 sent them, patiently, and are nothing grie-
 ued with the losse of their goods, and doe al-
 wayes giue thanks vnto God for all weale
 and wo, whatsoener shall hap. To be short,
 they depende wholly vpon God, they haue all
 their dainties, and all that they count good,
 settled in God onely, they enery where loke
 vpon

Of the Reioyce of the

upon the inside of will of God alone, they
 frame & apply themselves altogether to gods
 pleasure and commandment, doe ioyfully
 rest in the loue and good will of God towarde
 them with all their heart, entoye things pre-
 sent, gaze not greedily after things to come.
 Thus doe they alwaye reioyce in the worde.
 To this belong those sayings out of Salo-
 mon's booke, entituled, the Preacher, I knowe
 (quoth he) that there is nothing better for e-
 uery man than to be glad and to delight hys
 owne lyfe, and to eate and to drinke, and to be
 made mery or frolicke with his owne labour.
 This is Gods gift. Salomon doth not here, like
 some Epicure, exhort and encourage to ex-
 cesse, gluttonie, surfeite, nor to a voluptuous
 and Sybariticall life, as they call it: but to
 vse and entoye Gods present benefitts and god
 gifts with chearfulnesse and thanksgyuing,
 who abundantly giueth all things to entoy,
 as the Apostle sayth, and filleth euery liuing
 thing with his blessing, as the Psalmist Da-
 uid sayth. The same Salomon thus teacheth:
 When God hath giuen wealth and riches vn-
 to a man, sayth he, this is the gift to God, that
 he may eate and drinke of them for his por-
 tion, and may haue delight in his owne labor.
 For such a man is not carefull, mindefull of
 the

Sybaritæ,
 people of a
 citie called
 Sybaris, in
 all kinde of
 sensual de-
 liciousnesse
 passing all
 other: and
 thereof co-
 meth a pro-
 uerbe, Sy-
 baritica
 mensa, ap-

Godly in this lyfe.

the dayes of his life, bycause God doth fill his heart with gladnesse: **See many tymes else,** where also the same Salomon biddeth vs to let vnprofitable cares and vayne thought of mynde go, & to be of good cheare, to be quiet and pacient, in what case so euer we stande.

Her vnto maketh that saying of the same Salomon, wherein he exhorteth lyke as he dyd before, the saythfull and the louers of God: Go, sayth he, and eate thy breade in gladnes and drincke thy wine with a chearefull hart, by cause thy workes doe now please God: Let thy garments be whyte at all tymes, and annoynt thy head with oyle. &c. In so manye troubles and infinite cares and miseries of this lyfe, Salomon will yet haue the godly to be of god chere and courage, and not to bee carefull and take thought: to reioyce alway in the Lord, not to fret and vexe themselves. That thing can come to no man but through the blessing of God, like as he also with many tymes testifie, as when he sayth: God giueth wisdom and knowledge, and gladnesse to the man that pleaseth him. But to the sinner he giueth carefulnesse, that he may encrease & gather together, and so it may be giuen to him that pleaseth God. But if perhaps ought fall out, as the fashion of worldly affayres is,

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that galleth him, and stayneth his gladnesse
with some griefe of misde, by & by the godly
and faithfull Christians doe resort vnto
to their heavenly father, and hauing, as it
were, familiar communication with him doe
lay open their cares & troubles befoze him,
and whatsoeuer it be that grieneth them, do
earnestly desire ayde, helpe, comfort, wyth
most earnest invocation and prayer, & with
humble meekenesse call for mercy: & in fine,
whatsoeuer aduersities they suffer, doe be-
waile the same, as it were, in the bosome of
their most excellent and most tender louing
fathers they craue for to haue the same either
lessened and allwaged, or else cleane taken a-
way, and that with a most sure sayth and as-
surance, and yet in such sort, that they wholly
doe resignethemselues vnto Gods will, and
committe themselves vnto his goodnesse: as
men readye to beare patiently whatsoeuer
God will haue them. And if in y meane tyme
they shall feele their assistance or trust toward
God to quayle or be overthrowne of the de-
uill, if they shall perceiue any scruple of con-
science to arise within them, if in any point
they shal through mischance and vnadvised-
nesse, by the meanes of mannes infirmitie,
dwarue and so get the meselues, then doe they
repayre

Godly in this lyfe.

repayze to their Curate or Minister: & what-
soeuer is a grieve or trouble vnto them, doe
there open and disclose it without shamefast-
nesse or feare, and doe heare with gladnesse
the sentence of the Gospell pronounced vnto
them by the Minister of the Church, and doe
lay it vp deeply in their hearts and mindes,
as if it were pronounced by Christ himselte,
who is in dede our high Bishop and Priest,
yea, and doe rest therebpon with full intent
and meaning most hartily, and most willing-
ly. Besides they doe many tymes also resort
to the Lords Table, to þe ende that their faith
may be the moze kindled, & strenghtned, tou-
ching the mercifull loue and heauenly fauour
of God towarde them, and that the same ioy
in the Lorde may be by this meanes repay-
red againe, as it were, which our ghostly ene-
mie the deuill did go about to quench or darc-
ken. Her vnto may be added a continuall and
diligent reading of holy Scripture: Where-
in the Children of God wyth vnspeakeable
pleasure doe harde by heare God talking
wyth them familiarly, comforting the heauy
hearted, raysing vp the afflicted, strengthe-
ning the weake and doubtfull, calling men
from dispaire. Ioyne to this, Sermons and
godlye Exhortacions, which the Preachers

Of the Reioyce of the
of the Worde of Saluacion doe make : wher
with also y^e mindes, of the godly are maruel
lously refreshed, & that Reioyce of the Lorde,
here treated of, is so oftentymes renewed.
For God here doth worke ioye and gladnesse
to the hearers in deed, and the bones that are
brought lowe, doe triumphantly reioyce, as
the Prophet sayth. Of like effect are the pry
uate communications of the godly one wyth
an other also, touching God, and Christ the
Saviour : whiles that, according to Pauls
doctrine, they teach & admonish one another
wyth Psalmes, Hymmes, and Spirituall
songs, with ioye singing in their hearts vnto
the Lorde : whiles, I say, the worde of Christ
is among them plentifully, with al wisdome,
as Paule sayeth to the Collosians. Besides
thys, the very times and holy daies doe often
renew the Reioyce of the Godly, & that moze
is, doe rather augment it, & make it greater
than it was. For they stirre vs vp vnto the
remembraunce of Gods wonderfull actes &
miracles wrought for the saluation of man
kinde, and by that occasion doe fill the harts
of the godly with spiritual ioyes in the Lord.
Such are our Easter Holydayes, which are
kept to cōtinue the remembraunce of Christs
Resurrection: of Pentecost or Whitson tyde,
to

Godly in this lyfe.

to call the sending downe of the holy ghost vpon the Apostles: to minde the feastfull daies of Christs birth, when the worde being made fleshe, is celebrated: Likewise the feast of the Circumcision, of the Epiphanie, of the Purification, Palmes, Annunciation, Visitation, Ascension, & such other like. At which times that spirituall ioye in the Lorde, which the Godly haue, is marueylously much increased with a certaine heape, as a man woulde saye: I meane, in the remembryng and recounting of things done by almighty God, as I sayde afoze. Hereof commeth that saying in the Psalmes, touching Christs Resurrection: This is the daye which the Lorde hath made, Let vs triumph and be glad therein: And in the Apostle also: Christ our passeouer was offered vp for vs. Hereof is that saying in the Gospel read in the Church for Christmasse day: Beholde, I declare vnto you exceeding great ioy which shall be vnto al the people, that a Saviour this day is borne vnto you, which is Christ the Lorde. And also that in Esay: A childe is borne vnto vs; and a sonne is giuen vnto vs. These and such other like sayings, which are song in the congregation vpon feastful and solemne dayes, howe exceedingly thinke you, doe they reioyce and cheare by the heartes of
the

Of the Reioyce of the

the faithfull Christians? This, euen thus, I abide by, is to reioyce in the Lord, and not (as others at such times are wont to do) to make feasts and banquettes, one with an other, and seeke after pleasures and belly chere: but to spend the holy dayes in godly and deuout meditation, and to giue thanks to God for his benefites, to sing Psalmes and Hymmes vnto almightie God. What? doth not that frequent or populous resort and assembly of the congregation & Christian men in the Church, at all seasons, to heare the woꝛde of God, to make inuocation and prayer, to giue thanks, cause a large increase of gladnesse in the godly? What is he that can say nay to it? Therfore the faithful do most willingly come forth to be present with other at that most holy and alwayes to God most pleasant and acceptable sacrifice of praise, inuocation, worship, giuing of thanks, Hymmes, prayers: which at the comming together of the whole congregation is vsed ordinarily to be made, with very great ceremonie or reuerence. And it is not the least top of al, that they here tell how any of their brethren haue happily and in a safed and strong sayth towarde God departed out of this transitorie life. Whereupon they being also glad, doe yeelde thanks to the
god;

Gooly in this life.

goodnesse of God, and praye that they maye
haue the like departure, and doe followe the
course with a good will. And in thus doing, they
are not onely brought in minde of their owne
mortality, but also their most sweete and ple-
sant desire touching the heauenly dwelling,
is renewed, and the memozy to liue there in
the fellowship of Angels, and to enioye that
most blessed familiaritie in time to come,
with all the Saintes, in the life eternall, is
with singular pleasure stirred vp. Likewise
at the baptisme of an Infant newly bozne, the
ioy of the Godly is also amplified and made
more than it was, whiles they thinke and co-
sider, not onely of the number of Christians
herby increased, but also of the goodnesse, wis-
dome, and wonderfull determination & pur-
pose of Almighty God, regenerating or re-
newing vs by water & the Holy Ghost. They
are therefore with marueylous much glad-
nesse and chearefulnesse of minde present at
this ceremonie, ordeyned by Christ: yea, euen
of their owne forwardnesse and accord much
more than when they being desired, are vsed
as witnesses at the chldes Baptisme. They
are, I saye againe, present at it, most hartly
to commit the childe vnto Gods tuition, and
to ioyne with others there present in prayer,
and

Of the Reioyce of the

and to heare the most holy wordes of the minister that baptiseth, and to take inwardely a close and hid pleasure touching the kite and fashion of the heauenlye mysterie, and of the water of Regeneration, and to triumph ouer the deuill, as ye woulde say, and to reioyce on the chldes behalfe, being made partaker of all the sacraments, and to render due thanks vnto GOD, and to allure other men by their good example vnto like dutie.

That which I now entende to speake, may perhaps, seeme to most men absurd and without reason: and yet wil I speake it for al that, seeing it is as true as the Gospell. The Godly are glad more than a man wil beleue, as often as they haue anye occasion gyuen to doe almes, and the deedes of mercy and pity. For they are fully resolved, and out of doubt, that whatsoener bounty and humanity is bestowed vpon their needie neighbour, the same is bestowed vpon Christ himselte. Therefore when they see a poore man and beggar to resort vnto them for succour, they think that they see euen Christ in his owne person: and they reckon themselues happy whome Christ vouchsafeth to that honour, to craue almes of them. That saying in the Gospell is alwayes before they eyes: In as much as ye haue done

Codly in this life.

it to one of these my poore wretched brethre,
ye haue done it vnto me. **¶** And farther, they
thinke that they are many times tempted or
proued, and they thinke that it may be Christ
hymself, comming vnto them in the likenesse
of a beggar. And they wonder at those mens
lacke of fayth, which, if Christ were here coꝝ
pozally among vs, as once he was, saye, they
woulde denie him nothing, though it were a
great matter, and yet with a deafe eare doe
passe by, refuse, and despise Christ walking
here and there about like a poore beggar, and
crauyng his almes. They therfore, as I haue
sayde, are not a little glad when they doe an
almes deede, & shew liberalitie to their neigh
boꝝs. For believing the words of the Gospell,
they beholde and looke vpon Christ in their
neighbour, which will haue al that layde out
for him, that in his name is bestowed vppon
wretched men, and such as be altogether suc
coꝝlesse. Therefore they saide Christ being a
hungry, in their neighbour, they gyue hym
drinke being a thirst, they receyue him into
their house being a stranger they cloath him
being naked, they visite him being weak, they
comfozt him being captive or prisoner: and if
they be able, they ransome him also.

But among all these things, of what sort,
and

Of the Reioyce of the

and how exceeding great doe we thinke that
top of the Godly to bee, as often as (and in a
manner they daily do it, and without ceassing)
they talke alone with their heavenly Father;
open their desires vnto him, with so great
delight and pleasure many times; that being
as it were ranshed beside themselves they
pray the whole daye together, without hauing
any minde of their meate, yea, and continue
all night in prayer also. And surely, if h godly
do euery of any thing receiue a certaine smak
or taste in this same life of the blessed lyfe to
come, they chiesly receiue the same by thys
their talking together and communing with
almightie God, that I speake of: whereby it
commeth that they are neuer without cause
tired with praying. And yet in such talke they
are not onely busied and occupied for them-
selves, or for thinges properly pertaining to
their owne behoofe, but euen for the whole ca-
tholike Church; for the chrystian common-
wealth, for the spredding abroad of the Gos-
pell, and for the sanctifying of the name of god
also. In this exercise they do both craue all
good thinges, as well for the soule as for the bo-
die, at Gods hands: as are peace, quietnesse,
tranquillitie, concord of Princes, plenty of
thinges necessary to life, and such other like:
and

Godly in this life.

and also make prayer to be free from calamities both publique and private, from warre, famine, & pestilence: and besides, giue thanks to the goodnesse of God for the benefits receyued at his hande. Now such talking togyther with God is so swete and pleasant vnto the, that in maner hauing forgotten themselves, and neglecting the care of their bodies, they doe constantly perseuere & continue in prayer, as men raysed bpwarde with a certayne godly zeale and affection, and neyther take their naturall rest, nor long for meate: but after a sort thinke theselues already among the blessed companye of Angels, as if they were become nowe immortall, and not here conuersant in the world among men. Happy creatures, who thus being delighted, doe at large enioy in their mindes cōtinuall gladnesse, vnspeakeable pleasure, and the endlesse reioyce of Gods holy spirite. The world cannot so much as imagine what maner of things these shoulde be, nor beholde them (as they saye) but in a dreame: the children of God doe onely know them.

We haue, I thinke sufficiently declared and opened, that which we toke in hand, that the faithfull and true louers of God doe alwaye reioyce in the Lorde, howsoeuer the worlde

Of the Reioyce of the

wozrde go: to wete, aswell in sadnesse as in gladnesse. We will yet say thus much more. The right and true Christians doe take incredible delectacion: especially among other men, at his wonderfull oznature and beauty of the wozrde, at the varietie, grace and order of heauenly bodies, at the most pleasant sight of the Sunne, at the starres shining by night, at the amiablenesse of the earth, and the most faire, and as it were, spzinking countenance of naturall things: I meane so often as they doe see, as the Poet sayth:

The skie to shine, the trees to budde,

The chearing vines to spring

With braunches, & the boughes to bende

With full Grapes that they bring.

The standing cornes to yeelde their fruits

Each thing to flourish out.

The Welles to bubble, and with grasse

The medowes clad throughout.

How reioyce they, euen from the very bottom of the harts as oft as they do remember Gods goodnesse, which woulde haue all the other Creatures to serue for mans necessities: Woods, Groves, Hills, large Medowes and Pastures, Fields, Gardens of pleasure, fountaines & springes of water, brookes or fozds, ryuers, and whatsoeuer things else

are

Godly in this life.

are ministred out of these, for the vse, delyght
& fode of men, woods, trees, herbes, floures
or blossomes, berres, Pulle, all kynde of
corne or graine, all sorts of things that haue
life, wilde beasts for hunting, foules for hau-
king or fowling, fishes for angling, wæles,
and for nets, to let passe the stoe, plenty and
varietie of other things beside, almost wyth-
out number. Joyne vnto these also the hyd ri-
ches in the bowels of the earth, the secretes
beynes of gold & siluer, the metals of brasse,
iron and lead, precious stones and pearles of
pryce, wonderfull to beholde, for their great-
nesse, for their beautie, and for a certaine se-
cret vertue and operation hid in them. They
knowe well that all these thinges are gyuen
them of their most louing father, not onelye
for necessitie, but also for honest delectacyon &
pleasure. This now doth delight wonderful-
ly, & maketh the godly to reioyce more than a
man canne beleue: As often as they see the
corne in the fieldes, the fruits vpon the trees,
the grapes on the vine, the herbes and swete
smelling floures, as the Violet, the Rose and
the Lillie in the gardens, so many tymes doe
they take the fruition & vse of the same thinges
with a singular pleasure: & besides yeld vnto
the goodnesse of their most gracious & ten-

Of the Reioyce of the

der leuing father exceeding great thanks, extol & praise his goodnesse, haue his wisdom in due admiration, & in fine, doe testifie the ioy of their mynd, & their thankful wil toward god, by singing of Hymnes or praises. And how do the same persons reioyce, as often as they by occasion see their cattel come from y^e pasturs, their Goates, Elwes, Kine, & a lving home apace with strouting vdders: as oft as they see the labors and trauailes of the little Bees, in which God hath left so great miracles of hys wisdom: in fine, as ofte as they see their poultry bringing by their little Chickens with so great charitie, defending them fro the Wite and other Vermine, & huckling them vnder their wings: why, will some man say, that thing doth also delight the wicked & Godlesse men. I graunt in dede that y^e wicked do take some kinde of pleasure by the same: but y^et not in the Lord. For they doe not acknowledg Gods goodnesse towarde vs, that is the giuer of al those things, no: render thanks to Gods bountifulnesse, no: offer vpp the sacrifice of praise, no: triumphing with spiritual ioy, doe sing & make melodie in their harts to y^e Lord, like as the Godly are vsed to do: who are perswaded that all these aforesayde thinges doe serue for mans vles, that these thinges are the gifts

Godly in this lyfe.

gifts of God, who enermore hath a care ouer
vs & for vs a prouidence after a fatherly sort,
according to that saying in the Booke of the
Psalmes: Thou hast put a'l things vnder hys
feete, all sheep and oxen, & beside the beasts of
the field, the fowles of the aire, and the fishes of
the sea. For that power & right which we lost
in our first father Adam, the same haue we re-
couered again by Christ: so that we haue rule
& dominion ouer the creatures, & al things be
in subiection vnto vs, flockes or herds of smal
cattell, droaues of Beate and other great
beasts, wilde beasts and all fowles that flie in
the aire, all fish and liuing things swimming
in the sea. The Godly doe therfore know that
all these things doe serue their turnes and oc-
cuppings, as vnto whom the father hath gy-
uen all things together with his sonne Christ
Jesus. Wherefore they are not troubled in
their minds, as me casting how to liue, what
to eate, and what to drinke, when they see so
great care of their heauenly father for them.
Neither doe they make scruple to vse those
meats freely which God hath created, for the
sal:hsall to take with thankesgyuing, and for
them that know aright, that whatsoeuer god
hath made, the same is good, and in no wise to
be reiected, if it be taken with giuing of thāks,

Of the Reioyce of the

as Paule saith to Tymoche. Besides this, that gladnesse or Reioyce of the godly (to come a-
gaine to our purpose) is wholly cleere & sincere
& in every respect sound, true and unfeyned.
But the pleasure of the Godlesse by such
things, if they doe take any, is not pure and
perfect or substantiall: but marueylously pol-
luted or defiled: bicause infinite scruples doe
remaine in their consciences, that bere and
trouble them, and continually prick and sting
them. Those reioyce euen from the very bot-
tome of their hartes, & take incredible fruit of
most true delight. But these do cast of a vaine
trifling delight, I know not what my selfe, &
dreamingly imagine a gladnesse with the su-
perficiall port of their heartes onely, after a
fleight manner, and as it were with a dulled
feeling. Howbest I wade further in the mat-
ter then I had thought to doe at the first: and
therefore now at the length let vs make an
ende. It is saith, therefore, I sayth, I saye, in
Christ, whereby we are fully and wholly per-
swaded, that God the father moued with loue
incredible towarde men, hath preferred our
saluation before the deare loue of his onely
sonne, & for all our sakes hath deliuered hym
into the hands of the enemy, that through him
we might recouer that which we had lost in
the

Godly in this lyfe.

the first parent of mankinde, Adam, I meane,
innocency, righteousness, holynesse: & might
be deliuered from sinne, death, the deuyll, and
euerlasting damnation, and being adopted to
the sonnes of God, might be made heires of
the immortall good things & of the kingdome
of heaue. This same faith in Christ, doth both
lift vp and comfort the afflicted and terrified
minds, and also maketh a man alway to re-
ioyce incredibly. This faith enforceth a man
to cry out with the Apostle: If God be with vs
who can be against vs? He that hath not spar-
red his own sonne but hath deliuered him for
vs all, how can it be, that with the same sonne
he shoulde not giue vs all things? who shall lay
crimes against the elect of God? it is God that
iustifieth: who is it that can condemne? It is
Christ that dyed, nay that was also raysed a-
gaine, which is also at the right hand of God,
which also maketh intercession for vs: who
shall separate vs from the loue of God toward
vs. &c. This Faith being instructed by the
worde of God, confirmed by his sacraments,
settled in vs with the holy Ghost, resting and
reposing it selfe in the onely good wil and loue
of God towards vs for Christs sake, putting
the hope of attayning saluation in the free
goodnesse, clemency, benignity, mercy & grace
of

Of the Reioyce of the
of God for Christ, depending wholly vpon
God alone, hauing his onely respect vnto god,
and casting all his care & thought vpon God,
both asking and looking for all good things at
Gods onely hande, as of a most louing & ten-
der father, flyng to the onely ayde and helpe
of God in aduersity, studying from the verie
heart to please God onely, fearyng to offende
througħ a certaine honest & free bashfulnesse:
finally, occupied in a continuall & daily con-
templation of heauenly thinges with all hys
minde, thought, care, and desire, despising
wo:lolý thinges, beholding the celestial thinges:
this same faith, I say, maketh vs to reioyce
alway in the Lorde, and with gladnesse & mer-
ry chere to giue thanks to the Lorde for all
things. I beseech thee, the euerlasting father of
our Lorde and Sauour Iesus Christ, for thy
sonnes sake, our Mediator, high priest and ad-
uocate, that pouring forth plentifully into vs
thy holy spirit, thou wouldest stirre vppe, en-
crease and keepe this same faith in our heartes.
For it is not in mans power to beleue & trust,
but commeth from aboue from almighty god,
neither haue we the same of our selues, but we
haue it as a gift from thee, O most mercyfull
father: and we ought at all times to acknow-
ledge our faith to come from thee, to render
hartie

Godly in this lyfe.

hartie thanks vnto thee for the same.

Thus much had I, in maner, to declare touching the continuall Reioyce of the Godlye, being moued vppon occasion therebnto through that place of the Apostle to the Thessalonians, where he sayth: Be gladd alwayes, pray without celsing, giue thanks in al things. And with that likewise to the Philippians: Reioyce in the Lorde alwayes, and againe I say, reioyce. By which words the Apostle biddeth the godly ioyt, and them that doe cleane fast to him with full trust and affiance, to be of good chere & spiritually iocund at all times in the memozy and recounting of Gods good wil toward them, and in the sure hope of atteyning saluation, through our Lorde & sauour Iesus Christ, whosoeuer that the worlde go. Nowe happy is that man, and happy in deede whatsoeuer he be, that reposing himself onely at all times in God, who taketh care for the Godly being moued therebnto thowoe a certayne wonderfull and true fatherly loue and tender affection towarde vs, as is the naturall father to his child: en: whosoever I saye, beleauing the sonne of God to be our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and fully perswaded with him selfe, that there in no condemnation at all to be feared, of the that
are

Of the Reioyce of the
are ingrafted in Christ Iesu doth passe ouer
whole time of his life in spiritual ioy, taking
things present in good worth, & nothing care-
full with thought and penſiuenesse for things
to come, seruing alwayes in feare, and excee-
dingly reioysing with trembling, as that ho-
ly Prophet Dauid the Psalmograph doth ad-
monish.

This therefore that we may doe in dede,
and without counterſeyting, from the very
bottome of our hearts, howsoeuer things go,
both in prosperitie and aduersity, I praye the
same our Lord and God to graunt, without
whome there is neuer any sincere ioye, and
in whom onely the scripture biddeth vs
to reioyce and be exceeding glad
alwayes: to whom be prayse
honour, and glory, for
ever and ever.
Amen.

FINIS.



